

## Wide Angle



Joel Indrupati

## Church History: The Big Split of 500 Years

The two major divisions of Christianity came together this week, on the 500th anniversary of that historic day when it was split into two.

"We begged forgiveness for our failures and for the ways in which Christians have wounded the Body of the Lord and offended each other during the five hundred years since the beginning of the Reformation until today".

These words are from a joint statement, released on 31 October 2017, by 'Lutheran World Federation' and the 'Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity' on the conclusion of the year of the common commemoration of the Reformation.

The official press release from the Vatican is here: <http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2017/10/31/171031a.html>

I found these words of 'ecumenism' - a principle of promoting unity among the world's churches - appropriate and timely.

While there are many theologians who do not see the possibility of complete ecumenism - because a full common church doctrine seems unlikely - it is heartening to see that this joint statement also has the words: "It has become clear that what we have in common is far more than that which still divides us".

To understand the division, however, we must go back 500 years. It was on 31 October 1517 that an Augustine monk Martin Luther, apparently, nailed 95 theses on the church door of Wittenberg Castle in Germany.

He protested against the church's sale of indulgences - somewhat like certificates of God's forgiveness - and against the corruption in his Roman Catholic Church.

The influence of pope, the church's head, at that time was so powerful and so far reaching, that almost all European kings were under papal authority. And, therefore, calling the pope and his administration wrong was akin to an unpardonable sin, in the eyes of the church. And needless to say, Martin Luther was soon declared a "heretic".

That is why Luther had to hide and run from persecution. But, from various hideouts, he was able to translate the Bible into readable German. It had earlier been available only to the clergy; only in classical Latin.

But soon, along with Bibles, Martin Luther's theological teachings were mass printed and circulated - thanks to a wonderful new invention, called the printing press, invented 60 years earlier, by another German called Gutenberg.

Unlike the prevalent church doctrine then, Luther's Protestant Reformation movement was based on five solae.

Salvation of humans according to the Protestants was 'Sola Fide' (by faith alone), Sola Scriptura (by scripture alone), Solus Christus (through Christ alone), Sola Gratia (by grace alone) and Soli Deo Gloria (Glory to God alone).

There was a new religious awakening into the understanding of the scriptures. But there was huge political power mongering too.

A case in point is the British History of that time.

King Henry VIII was unable to secure an annulment of his first marriage. So, reformation theology came handy in his rejection of papal authority, and in the formation of the Church of England in 1530s.

His two daughters, Queen Mary I and Queen Elizabeth I, from his first and second wives, had been bitter rivals. Mary was a Catholic. Elizabeth was a Protestant. They ruled England one after the other.

Queen Mary I executed scores of Protestant church leaders, earning for herself the gruesome title of 'Bloody Mary'. And Queen Elizabeth I, when she came to power, took revenge by executing many Catholic Church leaders. Horrible times!

But, in 2017, we seem to be living in sensible times when both divisions of the church are saying "This pilgrimage, sustained by our common prayer, worship, and ecumenical dialogue, has resulted in the removal of prejudices, the increase of mutual understanding and the identification of decisive theological agreements".

*(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this newspaper.)*

# CIA releases trove of Bin Laden's files

Washington

A computer recovered in the 2011 U.S. special forces operation that killed Osama bin Laden contained a video collection that included kids' cartoons, several Hollywood movies and three documentaries about himself.

The list of the videos was included in the release on Wednesday by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency of nearly 470,000 files found on the computer seized in the May 2, 2011, U.S. raid on the al Qaeda founder's hideout in Abbottabad, Pakistan.

It is the fourth tranche of materials taken from the walled compound where bin Laden and his family lived to be made public by the U.S. government since May 2015.

Materials that still have not been released are being withheld because they could harm national security, are blank, corrupted or duplicate files, are pornographic or are protected by copyright, said a CIA statement.

The copyright-protected materials include more



Osama bin Laden

than two dozen videos such as "Antz," "Cars" and other animated films, the role-playing game "Final Fantasy VII" and "Where in the World is Osama bin Laden" and two other documentaries about the al Qaeda leader, the CIA said.

"Today's release of recovered al-Qaeda letters, videos, audio files and other materials provides the opportunity for the American people to gain further insights

into the plans and workings of this terrorist organization," said CIA Director Mike Pompeo. "CIA will continue to seek opportunities to share information with the American people consistent with our obligation to protect national security."

The materials released on Wednesday are posted on line - here - in their original Arabic.

They include bin Laden's personal journal and 18,000

document files, about 79,000 audio and image files and more than 10,000 video files, the CIA said.

The CIA said that the materials, like those released in the past, provide insights into the origins of the differences between al Qaeda and Islamic State, disagreements within al Qaeda and its allies, and the problems al Qaeda faced at the time of bin Laden's death. (Reuters)

## Missing Pets



**MATTU** - Male African Grey, wearing right leg band, was scared by a cat and flew away, says "Mattu/ babe/ babyko", Barbar (Fawaz Garden/ Alosra/Oxygen Gym, 27/10/17. **33308309**



**SMOKEY** - Male Norwegian, 13 mos, escaped from home, not wearing collar or ID tag, may be microchipped-but likely not locally registered, Isa Town (near Isa Town Mall), BD20 REWARD for safe return, 26/10/17. **33336733**



**ZUZU** - Female Maltese, 4 yrs, wearing collar w name, normally goes out and comes back, may have been STOLEN, West Riffa (Jari Alshaiikh), BD100 REWARD for safe return, 29/10/17. **34444144 or 37341431**



**FLOSSY** - Male Himalayan/Persian, 7 mos, not wearing collar or ID tag, gate left open-always returns - likely picked up by someone, Janabiya (block 571), BD20 REWARD for safe return, 26/10/17. **33511122**



**BELL** - Male, 7 mos, white w a few beige spots, neutered, not wearing collar or ID tag, gate left open, Isa Town (near Ramez), 26/10/17. **35305855**



**SILVIE** - Female Bikiface/Himalayan, 2 yrs, spayed, very friendly/quiet cat, not wearing collar or ID tag, jumped off 3rd floor balcony, may have been stolen, Dar Kulaib (Hamad Town roundabout 22), 19/10/17. **33101086**