

## ABC News 10 of Albany, NY interviews UTS's Andrew Wilson on Pope's passing

Thomas G. Walsh  
December 31, 2022



In an interview published December 31, 2022, reporter [Tamara Starr](#) of ABC News 10 in Albany, NY spoke with [Dr. Andrew Wilson](#), Unification Theological Seminary's Harvard-educated Professor of Scriptural Studies about the recent passing of Pope Benedict XVI at age 95.

Dr. Wilson recognized Pope Benedict XVI's exceptional intellect, and described him as a theologian who played a key role in setting the direction for the Catholic church.

According to Dr. Wilson, Pope Benedict XVI affirmed traditional theology against liberalizing tendencies. As the first Pope to retire from his role as head of the Catholic church in 600 years, Benedict was able to maintain a conversation with Pope Francis although they did have some differences in their views and approaches.

"The fact that he and Pope Francis were in a good cordial relationship shows the power of faith to bridge ideological and theological differences," he said.

The full ABC News 10 article can be found [here](#). The YouTube recording of the interview is available [here](#).

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## Wilson, Andrew

**Professor of Scriptural Studies****Director of Scriptural Research**

Dr. Andrew Wilson's approach to Scriptural Studies is theological and ecumenical. His Old Testament courses explore what the scriptures mean and have meant to diverse communities of faith—the people of ancient Israel for whom they were written, the early Christians who read them in the light of Christ, and today's believers—Jews, Christians of all stripes, and Unificationists. He challenges students to become interpreters of the Bible who can infuse it with new life for today's believers and seekers of truth.

Dr. Wilson is a prolific scholar, whose books and papers cover diverse topics ranging from religion and peace to character education to the theory of the spirit world. Being well-acquainted with Jewish attitudes and thought, he has written on the problems of Jewish relations with the Unification Movement for the past 30 years and has been a frequent participant in MEPI (Middle East Peace Initiative) activities in Israel.

Wilson's efforts on behalf of inter-religious harmony led him to write *World Scripture: A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts*, which has become a standard work of interfaith scholarship and a resource for interfaith worship. He has also been writing and teaching in the area of feminist theology, especially on relating to God as Heavenly Mother.

As a committed Unificationist, Wilson gives regular courses on Divine Principle and other denominational topics. He contributed his interfaith scholarship to writing a second volume of *World Scripture* that includes a broad selection of Rev. Sun Myung Moon's words. That book was adopted by the church as one of its eight official textbooks. Also, in recent years he has written and lectured passionately in defense of Mrs. Moon's leadership of the church.

Dr. Wilson joined the faculty of UTS in 1985.

**Education****Publications****Courses****Honors / Awards / Memberships**

- Ph.D., Harvard University
- M.T.S., Harvard Divinity School
- Dipl. R.E., Unification Theological Seminary
- B.A., Harvard University

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## NEWS

# Local theologians react to the passing of Pope Benedict XVI

by: [Tamara Starr](#)

Posted: Dec 31, 2022 / 12:34 PM EST

Updated: Jan 1, 2023 / 08:17 AM EST

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ALBANY, N.Y. (NEWS10) — The Vatican Press announced this morning that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI died at his home at 95. Dr. Andrew Wilson is a professor of Scriptural Studies at the Unification Theological Seminary. He says that Pope Benedict XVI had an amazing intellect and, as a theologian, was involved with setting the course for the catholic church.

“He believed that by affirming traditional theology and strengthening it against liberalizing tendencies...he can defend the faith and keep it strong,” he said.

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Dr. Wilson also says that since he was the first Pope to retire from his position in 600 years, Pope Benedict XVI had the opportunity to converse with Pope Francis- despite conflicting views. Pope Benedict XVI was more traditional and conservative, while Pope Francis wanted to keep the door open and accept more modern trends.

“It’s not like they were clashing with each other about the essence of faith; they were both strong Catholics,” Dr. Wilson said. “But it was a difference of approach- a difference of attitudes towards how the Catholic church can operate.”

Bishop Edward Scharfenberg from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany shared the following statement:

*Like Saint Joseph, Papa “Benedetto,” as the Italian children would chant to him at audiences I attended, always put his family first. You could feel his love some might call grandfatherly, intimate yet disciplined. More contemplative as he aged, even mystical, he was not distant or otherworldly, and with an almost impish sense of humor, never cranky. Not easy for a German!*

*For me, personally, he was always the priest, keeping Jesus at the center of his life, Mary-like. I will always admire his sacrificial humility. I am reminded of a prayerful plea of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, the Little Flower, Doctor of the Church, towards the end of her short life, “I want to spend my eternity doing good on earth.”*

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May the immense good Papa Benedetto did on earth also go with him, leaving an abundance behind, even as he journeys before us. We pray for him and with him as brothers and sisters in the Communion of Saints. Requiescat in pace.

Dr. Wilson also says that whether people believe that Pope Benedict XVI was right or wrong..., only history will judge. But the most important aspect to notice is that both Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have been able to work together.

“The fact that he and Pope Francis were in a good cordial relationship shows the power of faith to bridge ideological and theological differences,” he said.

Vatican officials are reporting that the body of Pope Benedict XVI will be laid to rest at St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican.

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