

A. Edward Sicienski, PhD
Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion
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Summer Research and Professional Development Grant
The Denial of Peter in Patristic Exegesis

Introduction

For the Research and Professional Development Grant I am proposing an article for publication based on a presentation made in May of 2014 at the annual meeting of the North American Patristics Society (NAPS): "The Denial of Peter in Patristic Exegesis." This article will also serve as basis for a chapter in my upcoming book, *The Papacy: A History of Its Reception and Rejection in the Christian East*, which is currently under consideration by Oxford University Press. I have every reason to believe that the conversion of the presentation into an article can be completed within my given time frame, and that it will see publication in both a peer-reviewed journal and (eventually) a book.

I. Statement of the Aims and Objectives of the Project

In 2014 I am scheduled to present a paper at the annual meeting of the North American Patristics Society (NAPS) in Chicago. Entitled "The Denial of Peter in Patristic Exegesis," this paper discusses how the Church fathers dealt with the fact that the lead apostle (and later the man considered by Catholics to be the "first pope") failed so completely on the night Jesus needed him most. At stake, I argue, are issues about the place of Peter in early Christian thought and the "infallibility" of his heirs, the Bishops of Rome (i.e., how can they claim to be above error when Peter himself failed so completely).

This topic is part of a larger, ongoing book project that will examine the reception and/or rejection of the papacy in the Christian East, beginning from the time of Peter through to the twenty-first century. A key element of the book will be the portrait of Peter as given in the Bible, and how this portrait was used by the Church fathers to support or challenge the growing power of the Bishops of Rome in the second through the eighth centuries.

My goal for the summer is to adapt the presentation for publication in a peer reviewed journal and then to incorporate it into the third chapter of my book, which deals with the patristic exegesis (i.e., how the Church fathers handled texts about St. Peter from the Bible). I have every confidence that such an article would be welcomed by those journals that deal with either the history of Early Christianity, Eastern Christianity, or

biblical studies. Also, Oxford University Press is currently reviewing my book proposal for *The Papacy: A History of Its Reception and Rejection in the Christian East*, and there is every likelihood that I will be offered a contract before the beginning of the summer (SEE ATTACHED E-MAIL).

II. Background on Work Already Accomplished

Over the last eight months I have assembled the books and articles needed to begin writing the book, including the materials required for this article/chapter. At present the full bibliography is 58 single-spaced pages, with a good portion of that dedicated to the patristic period (i.e., the 2nd-8th centuries) and the handling of the biblical material by the Church Fathers. For the book itself I have already finished the introduction and first chapter (dealing with the historical Peter), which situates me perfectly to deal with the next periods.

III. Statement of the Procedures/Methodology

Having already assembled many of the materials necessary and presented my preliminary findings at the conference in May, some time will be required to solicit feedback from my colleagues and integrate this into the final article/chapter. Since many of the texts are in foreign languages (e.g., Greek and Latin) this allotted research time (2 weeks) also includes sufficient space for the translation work, which is reasonable given my knowledge of the languages. Once the feedback is received and texts are translated, 6 weeks will then be required to edit the presentation and prepare it for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. This time dedicated to researching and writing will be in lieu of summer teaching.

IV. Importance or Value

For several centuries the proper role of the Bishop of Rome (i.e., the Pope) has been one of the most debated topics among Christians East and West. For Roman Catholics the Pope exercises a unique ministry, given by Christ to St. Peter and his successors, that involves both his universal jurisdiction and infallibility. For Orthodox Christians (and for many Protestants as well), while one might grant the Bishop of Rome a certain primacy, this does not involve the kind of authority or power historically claimed by the popes. These differences have divided the churches, and even today the search for Christian unity is frustrated by the question of the Pope's proper role. Given recent ecumenical dialogues on the papacy, along with the enthusiasm generated by the recent election of Pope Francis, an article or book detailing the history and theology of the papacy is thus both timely and useful.

At the heart of many of the present day debates is the question of what earlier generations thought of the Pope, the hope being that the past offers us a means of understanding the office that Christians today might accept. What this paper will do is link the writings of the Church fathers on Peter's greatest failing (i.e., his denial of Jesus) with how they thought of the pope, the thesis being that in defending/attacking Peter for his failure they were implicitly defending/attacking his successor, the Bishop of Rome.

Already my writings the *filioque*, beards, and the papacy (some of the issues that have historically separated Christian East and West) are being used by scholars in their efforts to end the schism. The article I wrote last summer on "Beards in the Writings of the Fathers" has already been published by *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, and has received very positive reviews. My presentation on the papacy and the *filioque* at Oxford in 2011 (which has since become a chapter in the *Oxford Handbook on Maximus the Confessor*), drew praise from scholars and hierarchs on both sides. As the Catholic and Orthodox Churches continue to engage in formal theological discussion about the issues that continue to divide them it is my hope that my academic work will continue to be used in order to advance the current dialogue between the Churches.

V. Further Research or Study

Once the article is completed, I will continue to research and write *The Papacy: A History of Its Reception and Rejection in the Christian East*, which should be completed at some point over the next 2-3 years. It will require working my way through the centuries, and discussing the reception and rejection of the papacy beyond the patristic period, from the ninth to the twenty-first centuries.

VI. Outcome

As my CV bears out, I have already published widely on Catholic Orthodox relations and the issues that divide them (e.g., the *filioque* and the papacy), as well as having given several presentations on these topics. All my previous summer research projects have already been published in either peer-reviewed journals or as chapters in books. This background, both with the topic and with the publishing process, makes me confident that given the time and funding necessary, this project can be brought to a successful conclusion in the time allotted. The interest I have already received about my book from Oxford University Press (SEE ATTACHED E-MAIL) makes me confident that journals will also be eager to publish the work.