



A Future of Faith: The Path of Change in Politics and Society

Pope Francis , Dominique Wolton , Jorge Mario Bergoglio

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Pope Francis met with French reporter and sociologist Dominique Wolton for an unprecedented series of twelve fascinating and timely conversations—open dialogues revolving around the political, cultural, and religious issues dominating communication and conflict around the world—now published in *A Future of Faith: The Path of Change in Politics and Society*.

Inspiring and insightful, Pope Francis's views on immigration, poverty, diversity, globalization, and more are borne from his Christian faith and basic humanity. Meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century requires compassion for those in need, a willingness to work towards common goals without domineering other cultures, and the ability to negotiate with trust, respect, and dignity. And for the first time, Pope Francis shares insights into his own personality, and the formation of his faith, including his experience with psychotherapy, and some of the most important women in his upbringing.

Controversial, bold, personal, and illuminating— *A Future of Faith* will serve to be essential reading for not only Catholics, but those who want to see how the “people’s pope” confronts the social injustices of the world with the foresight to create positive change.

A Future of Faith: The Path of Change in Politics and Society Details

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Emer says

Published today!

When I was sent an email asking me if I would like it to read and review the upcoming book by Pope Francis I immediately jumped at the opportunity. This is not my typical read but how could I decline the chance to hear the Pope's take on politics and current society as I always like to inform myself on world matters.

I think before embarking on a read like this you have to try to have an open mind and not immediately read in a reactionary manner. Well it's what I tried my very best to do. Because basically the Pope is always going to have some very traditional Roman Catholic viewpoints which we all may or may not agree with because let's face it, he's the head of that Church so it would be surprising if he didn't ascribe to some of the more conservative viewpoints. For the benefit of full disclosure I myself identify as a Roman Catholic, but I'm somewhat of a shaky and mostly non-practicing one. As a qualified biochemist I struggle with my faith on a lot of levels but more so with my Church. I find many flaws in the human aspect of the Church meaning that I think there are a lot of misguided people preaching things that should no longer apply now that we are an ever evolving and more socially aware society.

Before I embarked on this read I believed I liked this Pope. I think that it was the correct thing that Pope Benedict XVI resign from the papacy and that as Catholics we have a leader for the people more than how Pope Benedict was an academic leader. And this book has confirmed that for me in many ways. I have found Pope Francis to be a lot more progressive in his views and actions than I was expecting and a lot more than he is given credit for. Even with how he is living away from the papal apartments, and how he frequently ruffles a lot of feathers among the cardinals and preaching about serving the people: "priests must be goatherds who retain a smell of goat". And he is increasingly a Pope who is encouraging that the church diversify: "a society mustn't be homogenised ... Homogenisation is never fruitful, it always leads to sterility."

This book takes the form of a series of interviews held between Pope Francis and French reporter and sociologist Dominique Wolton from February 2016 to February 2017. And the easy rapport between the two men made for a natural flowing read. The responses of Pope Francis to all the questions posed by Mr Wolton were incredibly thoughtful and considered. It is striking how intelligent a man he is. Honestly, I had to consult the dictionary on a number of occasions with regard to some of the theological vocabulary. Topics discussed between the two men were under the following headings: Peace and War; Religions and Politics; Europe and Cultural Diversity; Culture and Communication; Otherness, Time and Joy; 'Mercy is a journey from the heart to the hand'; Tradition is a Movement; A Destiny. I also liked the inclusion of many extracts from some of the Pope's addresses (speeches) to further add to the interviews.

And while personally I didn't agree with all the Pope had to say I truly felt from reading these interviews and address extracts that there is a ground-shift in the actions of the Catholic Church and it's starting from the top. I found Pope Francis to be very open and honest with his views and feelings. I found him to be incredibly witty. But mostly I found him to be hugely thought provoking. There are a number of topics that he discussed that I was surprised to hear a Pope speaking so honestly and openly on!

This isn't a book with an aim to convert you to the beliefs and ways of the Catholic Church. But it is a book to open up a conversation about inter-religious dialogue and metaphorical bridge building that are seemingly

incredibly important to the Pontiff. Pope Francis' words on the Church's role in politics are enlightening to say the least: "At the root of all politics lie persuasion and closeness. The Church must therefore open its doors. When the Church adopts an attitude that is not just, it proselytises, and proselytism, I don't know if I can say this, isn't very Catholic! ... Proselytism destroys unity. And that's why inter-religious dialogue does not mean making everyone agree, it means walking together, each with his or her own identity." The Pope discusses the need for a healthy separation of church and state in which "transcendence can be expressed according to culture". He talks about the changes in the Church that need to come about with a hermeneutic continuity saying that the Church shouldn't "betray its roots" but instead clarify them and make them "easier to understand... Tradition cannot under any circumstances be ideological. ... Tradition, when it becomes an ideology, is no longer tradition. It is no longer alive."

Pope Francis frequently discusses modernity within the Church and talks about its "double meaning". He believes that "the Church has to accept today's ways of life" but also that modernity has a meaning that "assimilates worldliness" and rejects that concept of materialism and says that Christians "must live in the world, but without being worldly... and "take the good part of the world, and engage in dialogue with the world." He also casts some aspersions on the frequent message of condemnation of morality concerning "below the waist" and suggests that priests focus on other greater sins: "the sins of the flesh are not necessarily (always) the gravest. Because the flesh is weak. The most dangerous sins are those of the mind... Priests have been tempted, to focus on the sins of sexuality... The more serious sins are elsewhere."

Yes there were topics that I would have liked greater detail and discussion about, and there are things that I personally disagree with but on the whole I found this to be an incredibly stimulating and interesting reading experience. His views on maintaining dialogue with people of varying backgrounds and beliefs are incredibly admirable and I believe there is a great political role for the papacy to play in engaging opposing sides in dialogue for peace. But I also love how he brings these ideas down to grassroots levels: "Our children, from primary school onwards, need to learn to engage in dialogue. In our schools, they teach maths, reading, physics, chemistry, but dialogue? That's also part of the phenomenological structure of school, of teaching. It's 'I talk and you listen. If you don't understand something, you ask me and I reply.' You could say that it might be the start of a process that would go further, and which would teach children to engage in dialogue."

An incredibly thought provoking read that would be of interest to people of any and no religion with an interest in global politics and societal attitudes.

An e-copy of this book was kindly provided to me by the publisher, Bluebird Pan Macmillan, via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

All quotations used in my review are from my eARC copy and are subject to change in the finalised published edition.

Donna Hines says

Twelve meetings over the course of a year between 2016-2017 with a journalist who wants answers. The Path To Change was truly remarkable as it reveals the inner workings of the Pope. His deep thoughts, his innermost feelings, his outlook and prospect for the future for not just Christians but the world including

Europeans, Atheists, and more.
"By forgetting God, we forget mankind."
What makes Papa most angry?
What is most important to him?
How does he feel about current usage of technology and European territories?
Should politics play a role in church?
What's the role of Christians and the state of individuals?
This is just some of what was tackled and I was shocked by the questions and a few of the answers as they were direct and on difficult topics which were banged through with authority and conviction.
No light, fluffy, breezy topics here.
Does the Pope like being called the Pope of the Poor?
The answers may just surprise you.
What is his view or approach to same sex marriages? Is it truly a 'civil union' in the eyes of the church?
We are facing phenomenon of self destruction.
"God gives mankind 'unculture' so that it can be turned into culture."
In what respect is the Catholic Church 'Modern'?
Christians are open to spirit, fidelity, difference of opinion, parental roles, transmission of faith. Not afraid to be open.
Faith is beautiful.
God is good.
Finding God in beauty is hard.
Yet as Christians we are asked to follow blindly to uncover truth, goodness, beauty, faith, hope, and charity.
We need to put the economy and the service of people ahead of the service of money.
We must unite people on a path of peace and justice.
We need to protect and defend our Earth.
Hatred and War most pains the Pope.
Listening must be the way we go from here on out.
Secularization and Wordliness weakens the individual.
As we cross boundaries, build walls, refuse to even offer each other the sign of peace by shaking hands in such an offering we live in a world that is increasingly violent and selfish.
To read The Path To Change is to have a sense of relief.
A must read that was precise, well written, and intellectually stimulating.
Diversity and Inclusion for all!

Stephanie Jane (Literary Flits) says

See more of my book reviews on my blog, [Literary Flits](#)

I nearly rejected The Path To Change out of hand when I was invited to review it as I didn't think it would be relevant to me or that I would understand enough of the conversation to make the reading worthwhile. I'm British and, as a nation, we haven't been especially welcoming to Catholics since Tudor times plus, personally, I am an atheist with a limited school knowledge of only the most popular Bible stories. Having recently enjoyed reading philosophy with the Alain de Botton books though and being encouraged by the publisher's actively seeking non-religious readers' opinions, I took the plunge!

I have thoughts both on The Path To Change as a book and on Pope Francis' words so I will write separately

about each aspect. The book itself is quite a dense read. Its chapters each focus on one of twelve conversations between Pope Francis and French sociologist Dominique Wolton and I think their words are pretty much transcribed verbatim (in translation of course!). I found Wolton's introduction too pompous for my tastes, but he is obviously very much in awe of Pope Francis and comes across at times as being endearingly eager to impress him. This is a book, I think, to read slowly and muse over. I certainly found that I couldn't digest more than a chapter at a time, which is very unusual for me, and then felt the need to go walking or sit quietly alone. I wonder if reading *The Path To Change* as a buddy read would have been useful in order to discuss the ideas while they were still fresh in my mind?

Regarding Pope Francis' words, I was quite expecting to disagree on far more points than I actually found that I did. He comes across as surprisingly worldly for such a cloistered man, is obviously very well read within his field and beyond, and also has a talent for genuine communication. I understand that I will never agree with his restrictive views on homosexuality or the rights of women and actually got annoyed when his assertion in one chapter that women should lead the way in the Europe-wide fight against terrorism was then bluntly snubbed in a later chapter by there being absolutely no chance that women would ever lead the way within the Catholic Church! However I can get behind his ideas on greater and more effective communication between faiths, and certainly support his repeated denunciations of arms dealing and the putting of money above people. If only there wasn't such ostentatious gold displays in churches! On the whole though, I found I actually had a lot of time for Pope Francis - which was good as this book did take ages to read! - and think his tenure as Pope will be beneficial for the world.

Andrew Smith says

In this book Pope Francis lays out his thoughts on a variety of issues, during a series of twelve meetings with French researcher, intellectual and writer Dominique Walton. In addition to a summary of the discussions, the text includes extracts from sixteen speeches delivered by the Pope since his election in 2013. The subject matter includes, amongst other things: globalisation, diversity, communication and what the pontiff believes to be the greatest threat to world peace. ??My position on religion is that of an agnostic, or perhaps (a new word I was recently introduced to) an apatheist. I'm certainly not against religion, in any of it's many forms; I believe that, at its best, religion can propose a set of moral guidelines or rules by which societies and individuals can set out their stall or judge themselves by. In other words, I do think that the church, by working as common conscience and by vocalising its thoughts on important issues, can serve a useful purpose.

So what of this book? Well, the first thing to say is that it's not an easy read. To me, it quickly highlights one of the issues the church has, that of clearly communicating its message to non-believers. Pope Francis is clearly a very intelligent, well read and articulate man and when he speaks on a number of topics I found myself having a good deal of sympathy with his thoughts. The problem is that there is a lot of difficult stuff to get through to fully comprehend where he's coming from. Religions have their own vocabulary and there are numerous terms, words and references that left me puzzled. I confess I ended up skipping over much of this stuff.

Here are some of the elements that did grab me, though:

His statement that we are going through 'World War 3 in instalments', I found interesting. In his view the biggest threat to world peace is money, in that weapons are supplied around the world by the West, who then bemoan the fact that they have to resolve issues, often by force, that they've contributed to creating. He talks

a lot here about the need for social and political engagement – clear communication with all sides actively listening to each other. In fact, communication is a big theme in this book: the need for dialogue, negotiation and a desire to ‘build bridges’ (a phrase he repeats often).

He has strong views on globalisation too. He feels that it removes diversity, and that’s a bad thing. There is a need for unity, he says, not uniformity. His view is that we should accept and embrace difference. A common sense overview, maybe, but not one that is holding much sway in today’s world. He also talks of the danger represented by fundamentalists who only accept their own view of how things should be done. Again, a view that is hard to disagree with but but it's a problem that's going to be so very hard to resolve.

In a speech in 2015, the Pope made three key points:

1. That the economy ‘should not be a mechanism for accumulating goods, but rather the proper administration of our common home’
2. The idea that peoples culture, language and social processes should be respected
3. The need to ‘defend Mother Earth’ (primarily this being focused on the need for humanity to address climate change and rebalance its relationship with the planet and each other)

It’s hard to argue with these points, I think!

Overall I found this book to be a fascinating insight into the thinking of the head of the Catholic Church. I was impressed by his breadth of knowledge and his depth of thinking. It certainly doesn’t change my stance on religion but it does strengthen my view that religious leaders do have a valuable role to play in ‘big’ politics, though certainly not party political politics, if (and it’s quite a big if) we can find an effective way of harnessing it.

My sincere thanks to Don Shanahan from Bluebird and NetGalley for providing a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Laura Spira says

Receiving an invitation via Netgalley to read and review this book, I was intrigued. I am not a Catholic and know very little about the Catholic faith so I was interested to learn about Pope Francis' take on the world's problems.

The book is based around twelve interviews which the author, Dominique Wolton, a sociologist, conducted with Pope Francis. Each chapter reports on one of these with additional complementary material from public speeches he has made, relating to the broad theme of the chapter.

I found it quite a difficult read. The Pope is very well read and often cited works of philosophy with which I am not familiar. The extensive footnotes helped a little but are not easy to follow on a Kindle. And obviously he also cited Catholic authors and thinkers unknown to me. But even a reader without the necessary depth of understanding gets a picture of a very wise and thoughtful man, eager to use his power and influence for the good of the world. I found that quite consoling at a time when we lack strong moral leadership.

My only real criticisms of the book stem from my own background as a social science researcher. Interviews are tricky, even with lesser mortals than the Pope as your subject and I would have liked to know more of the thinking behind Wolton's approach than is provided in the introduction. What the book provides is a series of conversations, rather than what I would regard as interviews. The twists and turns give the Pope an opportunity to present his views in an accessible way but the dialogue reads very smoothly and I'd like to know how it was recorded and edited. It's also not entirely clear what language was used. The translator, Shaun Whiteside, is a very well respected translator, but, again, I would like to know a bit about the process.

This book will be of great interest to anyone wanting insights into the role of the Pope and the way the present incumbent is addressing his responsibilities, Catholic or not.

(Thanks to Bluebird and Netgalley for the ARC.)

jean says

I was intrigued at receiving an invitation to read this book as it is certainly not one I would choose. I'm not a Catholic and have little time for organised religion, but was interested in reading what a seemingly very popular Pope had to say about the modern world.

On a practical level I found the book quite difficult to read with so many footnotes and at times I found the translation a bit grating. I also felt that although Dominique Wolton asked some interesting questions he felt almost fawning at times.

This book wouldn't make me change my views on Catholicism or feel that the Pope's views on such things as women and homosexuality will ever move further forward. However, he does come across as a man who thinks deeply and wants to build bridges with other people and religions so maybe there is hope for the world.

Stacey Bookerworm says

When I saw *The Path to Change* advertised I was intrigued despite being an atheist, after all its not very often you get to read a book written by a pope.

Read more of my review here: <http://www.bookerworm.com/reviews/263...>

Victoria Sadler says

Now, the latest book from the Pope wasn't exactly high on my reading list but I was asked to read, *The Path to Change: Thoughts on Politics and Society* by Pope Francis, by the book's publishers as they were curious as to the appeal of this book to a non-typical audience. And, well, it certainly is an interesting read and an easy one to – the book is set out as a series of interviews held with the Pope over the course of a year by self-professed 'French intellectual' Dominique Wolton – but this isn't going to be a book that changes your mind about either the man or the Church.

Pope Francis is clearly a man determined to make the Catholic Church 'a church for the poor' – no mean task considering the wealth and privilege of the Church – and he is certainly a man with a great sense of

social justice. From these interviews it is clear how committed he is to change the Catholic Church, to make it a more active part of the global community, and to make it a church with energy and life rather than staid tradition.

The Pope addresses some interesting issues, such as that erstwhile question of why God lets bad things happen to good people, but it's also clear that he remains steadfastly opposed to such matters as feminism and homosexuality, even conflating the last matter with child rape at some points in the text, which is deeply concerning. He is also weirdly defensive about bishops guilty of sex abuse and rape. So, look, the book offers some genuinely interesting insights into the Pope's thinking, but the opinion you hold of him and the Church before you read this – for good or for ill – will be the same by the time you finish it. There's nothing here to really challenge that.

Julia Wilson says

A Future Of Faith: The Path Of Change In Politics And Society by Pope Francis, Dominique Wolton and Jorge Mario Bergoglio is a comprehensive set of questions and answers with Pope Francis. He addresses the issues of today, urging us to build bridges and not walls between us.

Pope Francis sees money as the greatest threat to peace in society today.

There were speeches of Pope Francis' included in the book too.

This was a title I was invited to read and not my usual choice of book. I recognise that Pope Francis is wise and educated on today's world. I must admit, I found the book very intellectual and normally prefer lighter reads, so I only read half of the book as it became too heavy going for me. The fault lies with me. The book is well written and Pope Francis is very likable. It is a great read if you like question and answer sessions on the state of today's world.

I received this book for free from Net Galley. A favourable review was not required and all views expressed are my own.

Madison says

****3.4-3.7/5****

There were a lot of things the Pope said that were really great and impactful and could apply to life outside of religion, and I really enjoyed that part. I was also presently settled by his "I don't know, I'll have to talk more about that" response to questions he didn't know the answer to, but knew that a good answer was needed. I think, overall, the Pope has good insight and is progressive enough for the Church to broaden their reach, but not too much in that the Church loses its essence.

There were a few things I didn't enjoy, though. The structure of the book was fine, but at times it felt like Wolton would just abruptly leave a topic of questioning when there was plenty more to ask. She especially didn't press him very hard about the Pastoral abuse within the Church that has been covered up for decades, and didn't press him for action on the issues either. (I know that this book was pre-the current issues, but there've always been Priests molesting children.) I thought the little blip it got was too short and it deserved more attention and more pressing from her. His defense of priests that had been accused/convicted of sexual abuse was...yikes. I wasn't a fan of that and it was concerning how little he seemed to speak up on how not

okay it was, and then to see him, today, go and pray over a candle in memorial of those victims. Words aren't enough.

The last chapter was "nice" but I didn't really care about the spotlight being on the Pope and his personal opinions of himself. I was glad that they were close and could be jovial and comfortable around one another, but I just wasn't interested in that.

They were both also wrong on "gender theory" and "gender is decided by nature" and that whole topic. That was a frustrating section to read just because they weren't....correct and were spinning off their own beliefs on it. But I digress.

Wolton's infatuation with the horrors of technology also got old. Technology creates barriers, yes, and it does take the warmth out of some conversations (emails are formal and stiffy in nature, yes), but on the whole technology and its impact has allowed for people on one side of the world to connect with, contact, communicate with and interact with someone on the other side of the world. And it's frustrating, too, to act like prior to technology there were absolutely No distractions that existed (as if people didn't read, didn't do things that took them away from the group they were in). I did agree with and like the Pope's comments about silence being rigid and us being afraid of it when silence is beautiful.

He's still rigid on feminism and homosexuality and his viewpoints on those topics are a bit disappointing, especially after he went on and on defending tradition needing growth/being about growth.

Some things were also a bit hypocritical, but that's just my personal opinion. I'm not religious, but I really appreciated his ability to say things and have them be applicable in all of society. My opinion on the Church and religion itself hasn't changed after reading this and I don't think anyone else's will, either.
