

# *Christianity Today* Article Discussion

[Editor's Note: These discussion questions by Pastor Ben Berger are based on the *Christianity Today* article "A US Evangelical Considers Pope Francis" by Russell Moore. Please note, *Christianity Today* requires a subscription to read their articles.]

## Discussion Questions

1. Russell Moore's anecdote about presenting Luther's 95 Theses at the Vatican highlights a significant historical divide. What were the core theological issues that prompted Luther's protest and the subsequent Reformation?
2. Moore comments, "Martin Luther is not as dangerous as he used to be, and one might wonder whether that's a good development or a bad one." What does the author mean by this? Do you think that's good or bad? *Why* do you think that?
3. "Evangelicals—for the most part—no longer think of the pope as the 'antichrist' or of the Roman church as the 'whore of Babylon' from the Book of Revelation." The Lutheran church, on the basis of Scripture, has long confessed the papacy as the antichrist. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; Revelation 13 and 17.) Did the reformers go too far? How can we possibly assert a human being to be the antichrist whom Jesus himself will destroy at his second coming, when there have been so many popes over the years?
4. Moore suggests that "better relations between Catholics and evangelicals" might be due to both sides changing for the better and the influence of a secularized Western culture. How might secularization impact the perceived importance of historical theological differences? As WELS Lutherans, how do we navigate building respectful relationships while maintaining our theological convictions?
5. Moore highlights core theological differences (justification by faith, the Petrine office in Matthew 16:18) as "not minor matters." *Why* are these doctrinal distinctions so significant for Lutherans? How do these differences impact our understanding of salvation and church authority?

