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Quotes on Benedict XVI's first year

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"I have been pleasantly surprised by the first year of Pope Benedict's papacy. He has recognized his role as a center of unity and has not seen the church primarily as a small remnant in opposition to the world." The Rev. Charles Curran, a professor at Southern Methodist University, in *The Tablet*, the British Catholic magazine. Curran was censured by Ratzinger's office in 1986 for his opposition to church teaching on contraception and other issues.

--- "The first year of Benedict's pontificate has not changed the problematic situation in the Catholic Church substantially. The needs for reform are still the same. In this first year, we have seen several positive signs, but there are also several deficits, which are cause for deep concern." Christian Weisner, chairman of We Are Church, Europe-based church reform group.

--- "For those who knew him close up, his succession to John Paul II, considering the great esteem he had for him, was considered natural. All bishops during their visits to the Holy See every five years remained struck by his capacity to give valid pastoral suggestions." Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Benedict's deputy at the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and now archbishop of Genoa.

--- "If I have to say one thing that underscored the first year of the pontificate, I would like to speak of (his) joy and the centrality of love that have had a profound impact on the life of the church and also drawn the attention of all humanity." Cardinal Camillo Ruini, Benedict's vicar for Rome, in the Italian Catholic newsweekly *Famiglia Cristiana*.

--- "In brief, Benedict is a conservative with some opening. ... (However) "Only if he embraces the model of Pope John XXIII and seeks to practice service-minded pastoralism, renewed by the light of the Gospel and the commitment to liberty, can he be a guarantor of an opening in the church and be a moral compass for the world." Swiss dissident theologian Hans Kueng.

--- "There is no reason and no indication that Benedict will not as vehemently punish, silence and make difficulties for any theologian, politician or other person within the church that doesn't tow the line in orthodox ways." Catholics for a Free Choice, U.S.-based church reform group.

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