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Front Cover Art as described by Dr. Robert A. Morey

While Biblical Christianity gives Jesus Christ the preeminence in all things (Col. 1:18), Roman Catholicism is increasingly giving the preeminence to Mary. The facade of the Cathedral of Umbria, Italy (c. 1290–1310), is an example. As you enter the church, you pass under a lower panel of Mary, the Queen of Heaven. When you examine the top panel, Mary is being crowned Queen of Heaven. *To the degree you exalt Mary is to the degree you degrade Christ.*

Part 2 Modern Roman Catholicism

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Introduction: The Collapse of Religious Zones

by Dr. Robert A. Morey

Introduction

Most people's religion is the result of their birth, race or nationality. Thus *geography* plays a far greater role in determining your religion than rational choice. You are Muslim, Catholic, Jewish, Baptist, Mormon, etc. because that is how your parents raised you. If you are a Greek, then it is expected that you will be Orthodox. If you were born in Saudi Arabia, then you should be Muslim. If you were born in Italy, then chances are, you were baptized into the Roman Catholic Church as an infant.

All this means that you did not *choose* to believe or not to believe the religion handed you by your parents. *They* decided that issue for you and enrolled you at birth.

The Thirty Years War

The Thirty Years War ended when Europe was divided into three geographical *zones*: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed. Your zone determined your religion. If you were born in a Catholic zone, then you should be Catholic. If you were born in a Protestant zone, then you should be either Lutheran or Reformed.

State churches were the order of the day and it was assumed that you would be content with whatever religion was dominant in your zone. If you ever asked *why* you were Catholic, Lutheran or Reformed, you were told, "Well, that's just the way it is."

Zoneless Means Homeless

But, what if you were an atheist, Anabaptist or a Jew? Well, *there was no zone for you*. Thus you could be hunted down and persecuted by whoever was in control of the zone where you lived.

Things were quite violent in those days, and people who were zoneless were often burned or drowned. *Zoneless* people, such as the Anabaptists, were often *homeless* people because they had to move from zone to zone to keep one step ahead of the noose or the stake.

The end result is that many people are perfectly content with their zone religion and are not really interested in converting to something else. They were born a Catholic, a Jew, a Lutheran, etc. and they will die the same.

The Present Mega-shift

The situation described above is what dominated the religious scene since the Reformation. But a *mega-shift* is occurring today that is in the process of altering this situation forever.

From Zone to Zone

Given the freedom of modern travel, people are moving from zone to zone at such a rate that the religious world is now engulfed in a maelstrom of chaos. More and more people change from religion to religion depending on whom they are dating or marrying at that time! The “global village” is producing a “global religion” in which it really does not matter what you believe as long as it makes you happy.

Where Have All the Catholics Gone?

Why have 25% of the Catholics migrating to the U.S. from Mexico, Central America, and South America left Catholicism? The basic reason is that *they left a Catholic zone and moved to a Protestant zone.*

Once they moved to the Protestant zone, they had the freedom to change their religion. This was not true in the old Catholic zone. The village priest, their family, and social pressure kept them in line. But now, they do not face any repercussions for leaving the Catholic Church. That is why they have left the Catholic Church by the thousands.

Papa Knows

The present Pope understands that he is probably the last pope to rule over Mexico, Central America, and South America as a Catholic zone. At the rate that Hispanic Catholics are becoming Protestants, it will not be long before the Catholics will be in the minority. Even now, Evangelicals comprise almost one half of the population of some Central America countries.

This is why the Pope called for holy war against Evangelicals on his last visit to Brazil. But he is fighting a losing battle and the destruction of the Latin Catholic zone is inevitable.

The Last Bastions

The last bastions of zone religion are Muslim countries where the death penalty for converting out of Islam is still enforced. I personally believe that once true religious freedom comes to those Muslim countries, we will see millions of Muslims abandoning Islam as they have suffered under its oppressive and cruel heel long enough.

Young people in Islamic countries today want to throw off those stupid veils, put on makeup, go out, and boogie with the rest of the world. They view Islam as a drag and it is only for old people who think they are living in the 7th century.

Why All The Violence in Muslim Zones?

Muslim clerics see this situation clearly and that is why they are torturing and murdering Muslims who leave Islam. They are using the fear of death to keep the Islamic zones intact. But that will not work for long. The more violent the Mullahs become, the more their own people see the ugliness of Islam.

This is why the Muslims have stepped up burning Christian churches in Muslim zones such as Indonesia. If the churches did not pose a serious threat to the very existence of the Islamic zone, they would be ignored. Since Islam is a dark and gloomy religion, the light and joy of the churches was attracting more and more young Muslims. The Muslim clerics finally realized that the next generation of Muslims was being attracted to Christianity. Their answer: Burn the Churches! Kill the Christians!

Muslim clerics know that their days are numbered and that *freedom* is an infectious idea that will eventually overcome their totalitarian monopoly on religion. The more desperate the Mullahs become to preserve the Islamic zone, the faster they are going to lose it.

Desperate Measures for Desperate Times

The Saudi religious police patrol shopping malls to beat up Muslim women who wear modern makeup, hairstyles, and clothing. They climb up on the roof-tops to smash satellite dishes. They do their best to stop the sale and distribution of modern music and movies in the vain hope that this will prevent young people from seeing that the rest of the world is having a good time. But they will not be able to stop the collapse of their zone anymore than Christian clergymen were able to stop the collapse of their zones.

The very existence of the Islamic zone is at stake today as more and more Muslims join the global village. I am afraid that as the Islamic zone falls apart, Muslim clerics will become even more extreme in their desperation to preserve it. But the more wicked, violent, and vicious they become, the more young people they will lose.

What to Do?

We need to take into account the mega-shift and to reprogram our evangelism to cope with it. As millions of immigrants flood into the U.S. from the Third World, there is a brief period of time where they are open to the Gospel. We must seize this window of opportunity to convert new-comers to our shores. Churches must open their homes as well as their hearts to immigrants. Racial and cultural lines must be crossed. The love of Jesus must shine forth as a beacon of hope to all immigrants regardless of race or creed.

Your church should set up classes to teach English to immigrants. Food and clothing should be distributed. A Christian "Welcome Wagon" should greet new-comers. By showing them the love of Christ, they will be open to the Gospel of Christ. The field is white unto harvest, but the laborers are few. Get busy winning sinners to Christ.

Fatima, The Pope and the Vatican Contradict the Gospel

Where do Evangelical ECT signatories now stand?

By Richard Bennett

The fanfare of Jubilee Year 2000 continued when on May 13th Pope John Paul II gave his homily at the occasion of the beatification ceremony for Francisco and Jacinta Marto at Fatima, Portugal. (For those unfamiliar with Fatima, in 1917, a vision claiming to be Mary appeared to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal.) What John Paul II has done, perhaps inadvertently, through his homily is to cause two very significant issues to rise to the surface regarding “Marian devotion”: first, the apparition’s message concerning salvation, and second, how the Pope has explained the same message.

His homily is fully in line with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly the Office of the Inquisition), the Roman Catholic Church’s official department whose “orientation is...in the condemnation of error...[and] in the promotion of **orthodox doctrine.**”¹ That department states that the message of Fatima “with its urgent call to conversion and penance, draws us to the heart of the Gospel.”²

“Mary” Ready to Lead Them Safely to God

Prefacing his remarks on the Fatima visions by citing [Matthew 11:25](#), that God “was pleased to reveal the kingdom to the merest children,” the Pope without comment reviewed briefly the history of the visions,

“According to the divine plan, ‘a woman clothed with the sun’ ([Rv. 12:1](#)) came down from heaven to this earth to visit the privileged children...She **asks them to offer themselves as victims of reparation, saying that she was ready to lead them safely to God.** And behold, **they see a light shining from her maternal hands which penetrates them inwardly**, so that they feel immersed in God...”³

In Scripture “*the God of all grace*”⁴ seeks, finds, and saves His people. The good news is stated in [Romans 3:24](#), “*being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*” This is the pure free grace of God showing, as it were, the very heart of God. Salvation is God’s demonstration of His own righteousness in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ in His perfect life and sacrificial death. It is God’s act alone and not that of any woman “**ready to**

¹ *Catholic Almanac* (Huntington, IN 46750: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1998) p.145. Bolding in any quotation indicates emphasis added in this paper.

² http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/co.../rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000626_message-fatima_en.htm

³ [Http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_p.../hf_jp-ii_hom_20000513_beatification-fatima_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_p.../hf_jp-ii_hom_20000513_beatification-fatima_en.htm) 6/1/00. Bolding in any quotation indicates emphasis added in this paper.

⁴ [I Peter 5:10](#).

lead them safely to God.” John Paul’s blasphemous words, however, are in total accord with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) that says,

“This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly...until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside **this saving office** but by her manifold intercession **continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation.**”⁵

It is one thing to recount an historical event. It is another thing entirely for a man who claims to be Holy God’s infallible teaching authority on earth blatantly to endorse a lying wonder. Does papal teaching such as this not attempt to rob God of His glory? Notwithstanding the Pope’s proclamation, the All Holy God shows forth the magnificent splendor of His justice in the Lord Jesus Christ’s redemptive work.

Message of Grace Alone Snubbed

The Pope continued in his recitation of the Fatima history,

“But God told only Francisco ‘how sad’ he was....He [Francisco] was motivated by one desire...‘to console Jesus and make him happy’. A transformation takes place in his life...He devotes himself to an intense spiritual life...and attains a true form of mystical union with the Lord...Francisco bore without complaining the great sufferings caused by the illness from which he died....Little Francisco had a **great desire to atone for the offenses of sinners by striving to be good and by offering his sacrifices and prayers.** The life of Jacinta, his younger sister...was motivated by these same sentiments.”

When the Pope says that Francisco “attain[ed] a true form of mystical union with the Lord”, he is teaching pantheistic myth. There is no union with Holy God in Scripture other than that explained consistently by the Lord’s Word⁶, for example, [Philippians 3:9](#), “*To be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*” The *American Dictionary of the English Language* defines a mystic as one who “professes to have direct intercourse with the Spirit of God.” It is no wonder that the Pope affirms the myth in Vatican Council II Documents, “...in **Hinduism** men explore the divine mystery and express it both in the limitless riches of myth and the accurately defined insights of philosophy.”⁷

Nor has the Pope applied to his recounting of this historical event the doctrine taught in [Ephesians 2:8–9](#), “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.*” Rather, his unscriptural teaching is directly in line with the same *Catechism*, produced under his auspices, which states under the heading of “Grace and Justification”,

⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1994) #969.

⁶ [Ephesians 1:6](#); [Colossians 2:10](#), [3:3](#); [II Peter 1:1](#), [Psalm 32:2](#), [71:15–16](#), [130:3](#); [Isaiah 45:24–25](#), [54:17](#), [61:10](#); [Jeremiah 23:6](#), [33:16](#), [51:10](#); [Daniel 9:24](#); [Luke 18:14](#); [Romans 1:17](#), [3:21–22](#), [4:6](#), [11](#), [5:18–19](#); [I Corinthians 1:30](#); [II Corinthians 5:21](#) and elsewhere.

⁷ No. 56, *Nostra Aetate*, 28 October, 1965 in Vatican Council II the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Austin Flannery, ed. (Northport, NY: Costello Publ. Co., 1975) Vol. I, p. 739. All Vatican Council II documents are taken from this source

“We can have merit in God’s sight only because of God’s free plan **to associate man with the work of his grace.**” (#2025)

The Pope’s homily sheds further light on official Catholic teaching when in this context he cites Francisco’s illness, for the same *Catechism* also teaches,

“*Union with the Passion of Christ...Suffering, a consequence of original sin, acquires a new meaning; it becomes a participation in the saving work of Jesus.*” (#1521)

The Pope’s teaching is a total negation of the Lord’s Written word that the work of redemption is “*by Himself*”⁸“*without the deeds of the law*”⁹“*not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast*”¹⁰“*not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us....*”¹¹

Pope Interprets Fatima Message

The Pope then interprets the message of Fatima for his hearers, “The message of Fatima is a call to conversion...” and he explains by doctrine and by example what that means;

“...the Blessed Virgin came here to Fatima to ask men and women ‘to stop offending God, our Lord, who is already very offended.’ It is a mother’s sorrow that compels her to speak; the destiny of her children is at stake. For this reason she asks the little shepherds: ‘Pray, pray much and make sacrifices for sinners; many souls go to hell because they have no one to pray and make sacrifices for them.’ *Little Jacinta* felt and personally experienced Our Lady’s anguish, **offering herself heroically as a victim for sinners....**”

Although the Pope has quoted [Colossians 1:24](#) in relation to Jacinta, he clearly has misused that text by applying it to justification to the eternal damnation of the very ones he purportedly is infallibly teaching. Out of a darkened understanding comes his phrase, “offering herself heroically as a victim for sinners”. The whole concept of offering oneself as a “victim for sinners” is a totally Roman Catholic concept, presupposing that the person is somehow good. It is not in the Bible.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the Perfect One, the only one able to make such a sacrifice, and this He did willingly as Scripture records, “*I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*” ([John 10:17–18](#)) Blatantly disregarding the Lord Jesus Christ’s words and the fact that He never was a victim, the Pope teaches, “**the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice: ‘The victim is one and the same....**”¹²The RCC teaches her faithful that they, too, are to offer themselves with “the sacred victim”, the Lord Jesus Christ. The false gospel of offering one’s self to cooperate in one’s salvation is dramatized in their worship. So Rome proclaims,

⁸ [Hebrews 1:3](#).

⁹ [Romans 3:28](#).

¹⁰ [Ephesians 2:8–9](#).

¹¹ [Titus 3:5](#).

¹² *Catechism*, #1367.

“Therefore the **eucharistic celebration is the center of the assembly of the faithful** over which the priest presides. Hence priests teach the faithful **to offer the divine victim [Jesus Christ] to God the Father in the sacrifice of the Mass and with the victim to make an offering of their whole life...**”¹³

In contrast, when Christ died on the cross, He exclaimed, “*It is finished.*”¹⁴ simple truth of Scripture is that “*there is no more offering for sin,*”¹⁵ for Christ is the Sole Lamb of God.

Pope Summarizes False Gospel

The Pope reiterates his theme of man-made salvation when in closing he says, “My last words for the children:...**Our Lady needs you all to console Jesus**, who is sad because of the bad things done to him; **he needs your prayers and your sacrifices for sinners.** Ask your parents and teachers to enroll you in the ‘school’ of Our Lady, so that she can teach you to be like the little shepherds, who tried to do whatever she asked them. I tell you that ‘one makes more progress in a short time of **submission and dependence on Mary** than during entire years of personal initiatives, relying on oneself alone...**May the message of their lives live on forever to light humanity’s way!**”

The most serious issue in all matters of faith is the Gospel. The Apostle Paul insisted, “*As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*” (Galatians 1:9) The children at Fátima persisted in the message that people needed to increase the level of their sacrifices because “...many souls go to hell because they have no one to sacrifice and pray for them.” This stands in direct contradiction to the teaching in Hebrews that plainly states that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross was the first, last, and only meritorious sacrifice for the remission of sins.

Through His all-sufficient offering on the cross, Christ “*by Himself purged our sins*” and “*sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*” (1:3) The Holy Spirit’s clear instruction is that the Gospel message is of one sacrifice of the one mediator, “*But this man, after he had offered **one sacrifice** for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.*” (10:12) “*For by **one offering** he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.*” (10:14) Clearly, the visions of Mary at Fátima contradict the message of the Cross and, indeed, deny its efficacy. The vision of Mary has shown contempt for the sanctity and purpose of the Cross of Christ. It lied about its identity (i.e., Mary) and lied about its origins (i.e., heaven). The authority of the Apostle Paul weighs in on the matter: “*And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*”¹⁶

Fatima & ECT

ECT I (“Evangelicals & Catholics Together: the Christian Mission in the Third Millennium”) stated that the issue of “devotion to Mary and the saints” needed to be “addressed more fully and candidly.” Towards the end of ECT II (“The Gift of Salvation”), the statement is made,

¹³ Vatican Council II Documents, No. 63, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 7 Dec 65, Vol. I, Sec 5, p. 871.

¹⁵ Hebrews 10:18.

¹⁶ II Corinthians 11:14.

“While we rejoice in the unity we have discovered and are confident of the fundamental truths about the gift of salvation we have affirmed, we recognize that there are necessarily interrelated questions that require further and urgent exploration. Among such questions are these...Marian devotion...”

Marian devotion was one of many items that ECT II declared requires “further and urgent exploration.” This is now a signal requirement, particularly in the light of Pope John Paul II’s homily. Thus the Evangelical ECT document signatories need to understand very clearly what the Pope actually meant when he said in his homily that these children were offering themselves as victims for sinners, for such a belief is part and parcel of Marian devotion, to which the Pope’s homily gives irrefutable evidence.

The problem does not end there, for the Pope has not been speaking into a vacuum. Rather, it is through ecumenical dialogue, cemented in such events as the ECT documents, that the RCC continues to draw professing Christians and their churches into the blasphemous Eucharist, of which offering one’s “good works” to supplement the Lord Jesus Christ’s perfect complete work on the cross is part, as the Marian devotions undeniably demonstrate. Vatican Council II Document No. 42 states that ecumenical dialogue,

“aims at preparing the way for their [professing Christians] unity of faith in the bosom of a Church one and visible: thus little by little as the obstacles to perfect ecclesial communion are overcome, **all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist**, into that unity of the one and only Church which...we believe, dwells in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose...”¹⁷

What “further and urgent exploration” has been done by any Evangelical signatories to the ECT documents on the teachings of John Paul II on May 13th when he proclaimed, “The message of Fatima is a call to conversion...” and that, “According to the divine plan, ‘a woman clothed with the sun’ (Rev 12:1) came down from heaven to this earth to visit the privileged children of the Father”? Where do J. I. Packer, Timothy George, T.M. Moore, Charles Colson and other purported Evangelicals stand on their commitment to “urgent exploration”? (These same men have endorsed a false gospel message in the ECT documents, nor have they repented of this grave heresy.) The Roman Catholic signatories through the person of the Pope have made the RCC position crystal clear. They must be answered either for or against, for there is no middle ground.

For Rome, the Same “Mary”

John Paul II has received messages from “Mary.” This acceptance of the “Mary” of the apparitions to be the Mary of the Bible changes the whole significance of what has happened on May 13th. The Roman Catholic Church has already declared much in its official teaching regarding Mary. Thus the same Pope teaches, “...the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix.”¹⁸ What is so serious regarding these titles is the fact that in the Bible the Comforter, the Helper sent to take the Lord’s place in

¹⁷ “Reflections and Suggestions Concerning Ecumenical Dialogue” S.P.U.C., 15 August 1975, p. 541.

¹⁸ *Catechism*, #969.

the believer, is the Holy Spirit. He abides with the believer forever (John 14:16). He brings to mind Christ's words (John 14:26). He testifies not to Himself but to Christ (John 15:26). He guides believers into all truth (John 16:13). Truly the Holy Spirit is another Advocate, a divine Helper, the Comforter, and the Spirit of Truth. The seriousness of teaching that these divine roles of the Holy Spirit, and that of Christ Jesus as sole mediator belong to "Mary" is that such teaching denigrates the divine Persons of the Lord Christ Jesus and of the Holy Spirit. This is grave heresy.

The same Pope also proclaims, "By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the 'Mother of Mercy,' the All Holy One."¹⁹ "From the [Roman Catholic] Church he learns the example of holiness and recognizes its model and source in the all-holy Virgin Mary..."²⁰ Biblically, the Holiness of God is the essential characteristic of God that is expressed in all His attributes. To attempt to address a creature as the "All Holy One" is consummate blasphemy and idolatry. "*Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou only art Holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee...*"²¹ There are many other heresies in Rome's teaching about Mary. The basic assumption of the Pope, that the Mary of their dogma and the Mary of the apparitions are one, doubles, as it were, the deceptiveness that has come to light.

True Christians and the Apparitions

Bible-believing Christians should be aware of what has happened and what is happening, as well as the common theme of the teachings of Rome and the messages of "Mary." Since both popes and apparitions together insist that all humanity bow down and worship that image called the Eucharist, true believers are encouraged to investigate these issues further. Both the apparitions and the "Holy Father" of the Roman Catholic Church claim divine attributes for the papacy. In official teaching of the RCC,

"The Supreme Pontiff, in virtue of his office, possesses infallible teaching authority when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful...he proclaims with a definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held as such."²²

And

"The Pope enjoys, by divine institution, supreme, full, immediate, and universal power in the care of souls."²³

This claim to the divine attribute of infallibility, "supreme, full, immediate, and universal power," can be achieved only by omnipresence, also a divine attribute. Both the apparitions and Rome's official teaching claim divine distinctives that exalt the Pope "*above all that is called God.*"²⁴

¹⁹ *Catechism*, #2677.

²⁰ *Catechism*, #2030.

²¹ *Revelation* 15:4.

²² *Code of Canon Law* Latin-English ed. (Wash., DC 20064: Canon Law Society of America, 1983) Can. 749, Sec. 1.

²³ *Catechism*, #937.

²⁴ *II Thessalonians* 2:4.

Since both the Gospel of Salvation and the Divine Attributes are at stake, and the deception of millions, a decisive point is reached for true Christians. They must bear witness to the Lord, His Gospel, and the First and Second Commandments by calling these things what they are: apostasy. To do otherwise is to deny the Lord, our Savior and His commandments.

How Serious Is Apostasy?

We plead with the Evangelical signatories to the ECT documents to publish their “further and urgent exploration” regarding Marian devotion in the light of the high profile May 13th beatification celebration at Fátima. The joint Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) in May 1999 issued a statement “recognizing the Pope as the overall authority in the Christian World” and described him as “a gift to be received by all Churches”. How do the delegates of the Anglican Church worldwide and all those who have signed on to ARCIC assess the Pope’s endorsement of the apparitions of Mary at Fatima?

While apostasy is predicted in Scripture and has happened right through Christian history, it still comes as a shock to see it face-to-face. Nonetheless, the Apostle Paul’s command applies to believers in this present generation: “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*” A plain warning against false doctrine is especially needed in the present day, even as J. C. Ryle said of his day, “Surely the dumb dog and the sleeping shepherd are the best allies of the wolf, the thief, and the robber.” To the devout Pharisees of His day, the Lord said, “...*you shall die in your sins if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins.*”²⁵ Fatima’s message has attempted to steal the Uniqueness and Glory of Christ Jesus the Lord. The Pope makes no secret of where he stands. Endorsers of ECT and ARCIC need to show their hand. Ecumenists who remain loyal to the Pope thereby spurn the exclusivity and splendor of Christ and His Gospel, and will likewise die in their sins.

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WebPage address: www.bereanbeacon.org

Original Sin, The Atonement, and Justification

by Dr. Robert A. Morey

Introduction

Most Christians understand that Adam is the “Father” of the human race in the sense that he was the first human being from which all other human beings originated. For this reason, Adam is called the “first” man in such places as [I Cor. 15:45](#).

What most modern Christians do not seem to understand is that we are related to Adam in more ways than simply by genetics. In [Rom. 5](#) and [I Cor. 15](#), the Apostle Paul draws several

²⁵ [John 8:24](#).

parallels between Adam and Christ. Jesus is described as the “last Adam” just as Adam is described as the “first man” (I Cor. 15:45).

Adam and Christ

In these passages it is clear that Adam’s fall into sin was substitutionary and vicarious in nature just like Christ’s atoning obedience. In fact, as we shall see, Rom. 5 says that we are condemned by virtue of Adam’s disobedience just as surely as we are justified by virtue of Christ’s obedience. While the imputation of Adam’s sin is the problem confronting all men (Rom. 5:12), the imputation of Christ’s righteousness is the remedy to that problem (Rom. 5:17).

Bound Together

Our participation in Adam’s disobedience and our participation in Christ’s obedience are linked together in such a way that if one rejects the doctrine of the imputation of Adam’s sin—the basis of the doctrine of original sin—he must also logically reject the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, the basis of the doctrine of forensic justification.

Throughout church history, intelligent heretics have always seen that the doctrines of original sin, a substitutionary atonement, and forensic justification stand or fall together as a unit. This is why Socinus and Finney in the past and others in the present feel logically compelled to deny all three doctrines.

The Same Terms

Our relationship to Adam is spoken of in the same terms that are used to speak of our relationship to Christ. For example, we are “in Adam” just as we are “in Christ.” Thus, union with Adam and union with Christ are two realities that share mutual meanings. All those “in Adam,” i.e. in union with Adam, receive certain things by virtue of that union just as all those “in Christ,” i.e. in union with Christ, receive certain things by virtue of that union.

Part I

Inconsistent Denials

Because the Evangelical world is filled with teachers, pastors, and evangelists who have very little theological knowledge, no grasp of church history and absolutely no training in logic; it is not surprising to find some people objecting to the doctrine of original sin on the grounds that it would be “unjust” if God were to punish us on the basis of the evil done by someone else. The very idea that God would view and treat us on the basis of what someone else did or did not do is “absurd” according to them.

Yet, at the same time, these same people when pressed will admit that God viewed and treated Jesus on the basis of their sin! If “Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (I Cor. 15:4), then how can it be unjust for us to die for Adam’s sin?

Church History

Church history demonstrates that a rejection of the doctrine of original sin will in time lead to a rejection of the vicarious atonement and forensic justification. This is exactly what happened in 18th Century Liberal Theology.

Liberal theologians began with a rejection of the doctrine of original sin and its resulting depravity. This led them to reject the doctrine of Christ's substitutionary atonement. On the basis of "reason," they then concluded that if it is unjust to be condemned on the basis of the work of another, then it is equally unjust to be saved on the basis of the work of another. Their rationalism eventually led them to deny the blood atonement of Christ.

This is why the doctrine of original sin is absolutely essential to Christian theology and why the Christian Church has always condemned as heretical all Pelagian and semi-Pelagian views of man which in some way deny or weaken the doctrine of original sin and its resulting depravity. The validity of a substitutionary atonement and forensic justification is based on the validity of the imputation of Adam's sin to us.

Three Essential Concepts

There are three essential concepts that form the basis of the doctrines of original sin, vicarious atonement, and forensic justification:

#1 Solidarity

The Bible teaches a concept of solidarity in which an individual is viewed and treated in terms of his relationship to a group, be it a tribe, a nation or mankind as a whole, while the "group" is viewed and treated in terms of its relationship to its original head.

Man As Image Bearer

This is why the Bible can speak of each individual human being as having dignity and worth by virtue of his or her participation in the solidarity of the human race. Each individual person is important because mankind as a whole is important. We can view each person we meet as being in the image of God by virtue of mankind's relationship to Adam who was created in the image of God ([Gen. 1:26–27](#); [James 3:9](#)).

Corporate and Individual Election

An individual Jew was viewed as "chosen" by virtue his participation in the solidarity of the "chosen" nation. Yet, at the same time, the nation was viewed as "chosen" because of its relationship to Abraham who was individually chosen by God ([Gen. 12:1–7](#)).

The Levitical Priesthood

An individual could be blessed by virtue of his participation in the solidarity of his tribe. For example, an individual Levite could be a priest by virtue his participation in the solidarity of the Tribe of Levi while the Tribe of Levi was viewed as the priesthood by virtue of its relationship to Levi who was individually chosen to be the high priest ([Num. 18:6–24](#)).

The Ninevites

Each individual Ninevite was delivered from judgment by virtue of his participation in the solidarity of the nation of Nineveh whose King repented before God ([Jonah 3; 4:11](#)). He could just as easily have been punished for the corporate guilt he bore. But the nation as a whole was delivered on a corporate basis when its head repented in sackcloth and ashes. It did not matter if he, as an individual, had sinned or repented. The destiny of his nation was his destiny.

Corporate Guilt and Punishment

The suffering experienced by individual Egyptians during the plagues; by individual Canaanites, Philistines, Amorites, Hittites, etc., during the conquest; by individual Jews in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities; and all the other judgments sent against nations, were justified by God on the basis of their participation in the solidarity of their nation.

For example, even though a certain individual Egyptian may not have harmed or mistreated the Jews in any way, yet, because he was an Egyptian, he suffered under the ten plagues. His individual actions did not negate his corporate guilt that arose out of his participation in the solidarity of the nation of Egypt.

Even The Righteous

A righteous man can view himself guilty in a corporate sense by virtue of the solidarity of his tribe's or nation's sin. Thus Nehemiah confessed the corporate sins of his nation ([Neh. 1:5–11](#)).

In this passage, it is clear that an individual can be viewed and treated by God as being guilty of sins for which his nation was guilty. That he himself had not done the particular sins in question did not negate the corporate guilt he bore.

It is on this basis that the punishment for certain sins were visited on entire cities like Sodom or nations such as Egypt. Because of the solidarity of the family unit, the punishment for certain sins could rest on several generations ([Exo. 20:5](#); [Josh. 7:24–26](#); [Jer. 22:28–30](#); [36:31](#)).

God's corporate blessing or judgment on tribes, cities, nations, and mankind as a whole are possible only on the basis of the concept of solidarity. Such judgments as the Flood or the Conquest can only be understood and justified in this way.

In Our Secular Life

The concept of solidarity is also a necessary part of secular life as well as being a Biblical principle. When the leadership of a nation declares war on another nation, each individual citizen is at war whether he knows about it or agrees with it. He can be killed or his goods seized simply on the basis of his being a part of his nation. He must bear the corporate guilt and punishment due to the sins of his nation. Thus, human government itself is based on the concept of solidarity.

#2 Representation

The Bible teaches a concept of representation in which the acts and decisions of one's representative is viewed and treated as being one's own acts and decisions.

In its secular sense, this concept serves as the basis for representative government. If our representatives in Congress declare war, it means that we are viewed and treated as having declared war.

If our representatives vote in a new tax, we have to pay it because we are viewed and treated as if we voted it into law. It does not matter if you disagree with or are ignorant of the actions of your representative. You are responsible legally and morally for the acts and decisions of your representatives.

Examples in Scripture

We find this same principle at work in Scripture. Individuals are viewed and treated by God according to the actions and decisions of their representatives. This worked for either cursing or for blessing.

For Cursing

In terms of cursing, Pharaoh's stubbornness led to God's judgment on the entire nation ([Exo. 7–11](#)). Those who followed Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On suffered their fate ([Num. 16](#)). Each evil king of Israel or Judah brought judgment on the entire nation. For example, Israel had no rain because of the evil deeds of King Ahab ([I Kings 17f](#)).

For Blessing

In its positive sense, the actions and decisions of good kings brought blessing to the entire nation. For example, the nation was delivered because godly King Hezekiah sought the Lord ([II Kings 19](#)).

The Atonement

The greatest illustration of the principle of representation is the substitutionary and vicarious atonement of Christ ([I Cor. 15:3–4](#)). We are saved on the basis of the actions and decisions of Christ our representative. He is our Mediator, Advocate, and Great High Priest ([I Tim. 2:5](#); [I John 2:1](#); [Heb. 2:17](#)). The atonement and justification as well as original sin are all based on the principle of representation.

#3 Imputation

The Bible teaches a concept of imputation in which God takes the life and works of someone and applies them to the record of another who is then treated on that basis. Christian theology has always taught that there are three great acts of imputation:

1. Adam's sin is imputed to us at conception.
2. Our sin was imputed to Christ in the atonement.
3. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us in justification.

The Logic of It

That Adam's sin is imputed to us should not bother us any more than that our sins were imputed to Christ. That we should suffer for Adam's sin is just as acceptable as Christ suffering for our sins. That death came to us through Adam is just as acceptable as life coming to us through Christ. Divine justice is as equally satisfied with the imputation of Adam's sin as it is with the imputation of Christ's righteousness. The justice of all three acts of imputation will rise or fall together.

Biblical Examples

That God can choose to "impute" sin or not to "impute" sin is clear from [Psa. 32:2](#) and [Rom. 4:6](#). That it is God who determines what sins are to be placed on one's record is clear from the usage of the word in Scripture: [Lev. 7:18](#); [17:3–4](#); [I Sam. 22:15](#); [Rom. 4:8, 11, 22, 23, 24](#); [5:13](#); [II Cor. 5:19](#); [James 2:23](#).

That Christ suffered and died for our sins which were imputed to His account by the Father is the very heart and soul of the Christian Gospel ([I Cor. 15:3–4](#)). Our sins were imputed to Christ and He was viewed and treated by God accordingly. Such passages as [Isa. 53:4–6](#); [John 1:29](#); [I Cor. 15:3–4](#); [II Cor. 5:21](#); [I Pet. 2:24](#), etc., are so clear that only a deranged mind could miss this point.

Once a person accepts the justice of Christ bearing his sin, guilt, and punishment, then he cannot logically or exegetically reject the justice of his bearing the sin, guilt, and punishment of Adam.

Forensic Justification

In the Biblical doctrine of justification, the righteousness of Christ is "imputed" to us, i.e., God places it on our record and then views and treats us in terms of that righteousness ([Rom. 5:1–21](#); [Phil. 3:9](#)).

Righteousness can be imputed to us because Christ is our representative ([Heb. 9:11–28](#)) and because of the solidarity of His people for whom He came ([Matt. 1:21](#)). Justification is based on the concept of imputation just as much as the doctrines of original sin and the atonement.

Part II

Our Relationship To Adam

In What Ways are We Related to Adam?

#1. We are related to Adam in terms of a genetic solidarity.

In Scripture, genetic solidarity in and of itself can serve as a sufficient basis for moral and spiritual implications. Thus the superiority of Christ's priesthood over against the Levitical priesthood is based solely on the fact that Abraham, the genetic source of Levi, paid tithes to Melchizedek ([Heb. 5:6](#); [7:4–10](#)).

That all men participate in a genetic solidarity with Adam is the basis for the doctrine that all men are created in the image of God. Thus if you deny the justice of genetic solidarity when it comes to original sin, you have also, in principle, denied that man is God's image bearer.

Ideas are not like taxi cabs in which you can get out when you want. You have to ride in that cab until you get to the end of your journey. The attempt to deny the principle of solidarity when it comes to the Fall but accept it when it comes to the Creation, is sheer hypocrisy.

#2. We are related to Adam in terms of a spiritual solidarity.

Adam procreated his descendants “in his own image” which had been corrupted by his fall into sin and guilt ([Gen. 5:3](#)). That Adam’s depravity was passed on to his children is manifested by the universality and inevitability of man’s sinfulness that reveals itself “from the womb” and even “in the womb” ([Gen. 6:5](#); [8:21](#); [25:22–26](#); [Psa. 14:1–6](#); [51:5](#); [58:3](#); [Rom. 3:23](#); [Eph. 2:1–3](#)).

#3. We are related to Adam in terms of representation.

In [Rom. 5:12–21](#), Paul clearly draws several parallels between the representative nature of Christ’s actions and the representative nature of Adam’s actions.

In [I Cor. 15](#), Paul tells us that by virtue of our being “in Adam,” i.e. in union with Adam as our head and representative, we are all spiritually dead. He sets forth a parallel between being “in Adam” and being “in Christ.”

What Adam or Christ did is viewed by God as what we did. When Adam sinned, we sinned ([Rom. 5:12](#)). When he died spiritually, we died spiritually ([I Cor. 15:22](#)). When Christ was crucified, we were crucified ([Gal. 2:20](#)). We died, were buried and rose when Christ our Head and Representative died, was buried and rose from the dead ([Rom. 6:1–6](#); [Eph. 2:6](#)).

#4. We are related to Adam by way of imputation.

[Rom. 5](#) clearly teaches that Adam’s sin and condemnation were imputed to his descendants. Thus the universality of death is traced to the solidarity of mankind’s participation in the sin of Adam (v.12–17).

The universality of condemnation is also traced back to man’s solidarity in Adam (v.18). Paul also tells us that all men are “constituted” or “made” sinners by virtue of their union with Adam (v.19).

Part III Eden and Calvary

What Christ did on Mt. Calvary is viewed in Scripture as the opposite of what Adam did in the Garden. Thus, as our legal representative and substitute, Christ lived and died in our place. In other words, what He did was credited to our account as if we did it. His life and death are substitutionary in the same way that Adam’s life and death were substitutionary.

Christ’s atoning work also provided the remedy to undo the consequences of Adam’s fall into sin and guilt. Thus forensic justification is designed to remove the imputation of Adam’s guilt while progressive sanctification is designed to remove the impartation of Adam’s depravity.

The atonement of Christ is thus structured to be the reverse parallel to the imputation and impartation of Adam’s sin and guilt. To claim that it is unjust for us to share in Adam’s sin and yet, at the same time, to claim that it is just to share in Christ’s righteousness is irrational as well as anti-scriptural. You cannot have your cake and eat it too!

The Temptation

The obvious parallel between Christ's temptation in the wilderness ([Matt. 4](#)) and Adam's temptation in the Garden ([Gen. 3:1–7](#)) cannot be denied. But whereas Adam was defeated by the devil, Christ was now victorious.

Why did Christ have to go through the temptation at the outset of His public ministry? Jesus begins at the beginning of man's sin, the Fall of Adam in the Garden. He must thus begin by passing the same temptation that foiled the first Adam.

The Parallels

The following chart reveals some of the parallels between Adam and Christ:

The First Adam
The Last Adam
The Son of God ([Lk. 3:38](#))
The Son of God ([Mk. 1:1](#))
Temptation ([Gen. 3](#))
Temptation ([Matt. 4](#))
Disobedience ([Gen. 3](#))
Obedience ([Matt. 4](#))
Condemnation ([Rom. 5](#))
Justification ([Rom. 5](#))
Death ([Rom. 5](#); [1 Cor. 15](#))
Life ([Rom. 5](#); [1 Cor. 15](#))

Obedience Vs. Disobedience

The chart above reveals that it is the “obedience” of Christ which removes the “disobedience” of Adam ([Rom. 5:19](#); [Phil. 2:5–11](#); [Heb. 5:8](#)). We are saved by His active and passive obedience and not just by His death on the cross alone.

Creation

All men are viewed as being in the image of God because of their solidarity with Adam who, as their representative, was created in the image of God. Although this image is marred by sin, man is still the image-bearer of God and thus has intrinsic worth and dignity ([Gen. 1:26–27](#) cf. [James 3:9](#)).

The Cultural Mandate

Because of man's solidarity with Adam, when he was given the task of taking dominion over the earth, all his descendants were given the responsibility to be good stewards of the earth and its resources. Thus mankind as a whole was given the cultural mandate through Adam their representative ([Gen. 1:27–30](#); [2:1–17](#)).

The Radical Fall

The imputation of Adam's sin, guilt, and condemnation to his descendants and the resulting universality of death and totality of depravity are clearly revealed in Scripture. In [Rom. 5:12–21](#), we are said to receive the following things from our solidarity with Adam our representative:

1. sin (v. 12a) -legal and personal
2. physical death (v.12b) -consequence
3. spiritual death (v.15) -depravity
4. judgment/condemnation (v.16) -guilt
5. the reign of death (v.17) -bondage
6. condemnation for all (v.18) -guilt
7. all made sinners (v.19) -depravity

In [I Cor. 15](#), our union with Adam means:

1. death (v.21) -consequence
2. all “in Adam” died when he spiritually died (v.22) -consequence
3. we bear his image and likeness which is sinful, mortal and corrupt (v.45–49) -nature

Redemption

The results of Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience are paralleled to each other in Scripture.

Adam

Christ

depravity

condemnation (position)

death (future)

(condition)

sanctification

justification (position)

life (future)

(condition)

Conclusion

The doctrine of original sin is based on the same essential principles that underlie the doctrines of man as the image bearer of God, the atonement and justification. We are viewed and treated by God as sinners on the basis of the imputation of Adam's sin, guilt, and condemnation to our account and the impartation of Adam's depravity and death to our natures. In short, we sin because we are sinners by nature from conception. Thus it is no surprise that sin and death are both universal and inevitable.

All of humanity is in solidarity with Adam in his creation and his fall. Just as man's dignity is based on his solidarity with Adam in his creation, man's depravity is based on his solidarity with Adam in his fall. Both begin at conception. To reject the one is to reject the other.

Christ's work of atonement is based on the same kind of solidarity and representation that are found in our relationship to Adam. They are both substitutionary and vicarious in nature. To reject the one is to reject the other.

The imputation of Christ's righteousness in justification is structured in Scripture to be the remedy to the imputation of Adam's unrighteousness in original sin. To reject the one is to reject the other.

The impartation of Christ's righteousness to our natures in sanctification is structured in Scripture to be the remedy to the impartation of Adam's depravity and death to our natures. To reject the one is to reject the other.

In short, the decisions and actions of Adam and Christ are so intertwined in Scripture that they cannot be separated. To deny the one is to deny the other. Thus any denial of the doctrines of original sin, substitutionary atonement and forensic justification must be deemed as serious heresy and as sufficient grounds for excommunication.

Application

Since Roman Catholicism denies the Biblical doctrine of original sin, the finality and perfection of Christ's atonement, it is no wonder that it denies forever the Biblical doctrine of justification. Thus it has denied the essential core of the Gospel and stands under the condemnation of [Gal. 1:8](#).

Not Those Works, But These Works! Qualifying the good works approved by God in Roman Catholic justification

By: Robert Michael Zins

If it were possible, we would cause a sleep to fall over every Seminary and Bible College student and professor for just a little while. We would do so that we might go into our institutes of higher learning to place in front of all students and professors one question which they must answer correctly, upon awakening, or lose their standing as pupil or instructor. This question is the most important question that one can possibly ask. How we answer this question will display our understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It truly does separate the sheep from the goats, so to speak. It is the question which should be the chief inquiry of all evangelism. It is that important. What then is this question? It is as follows:

“What is the righteousness contemplated by God in the verdict of justification?”

This question appears easy enough to answer. We are simply asking what righteousness does God have in mind when He justifies the ungodly? We are asking, “What does God take into account when He justifies the unrighteous?” What is the basis of justification? What averts the wrath of God so that He can justify the ungodly? Is it faith? Is it good works? Is it good works done in faith? Is it a contractual arrangement of obligation by God to accept good works? Is it faith plus works? Is it condign merit [merit deserved in virtue of grace]? Is it congruent merit [merit given as fitting]? Is it faithfulness? Is it fruitful faith? Is there anything at all in the sinner to which God looks in the satisfaction of His justice?

In answering this question, we are at the heart of the Gospel. Your answer will shed light on all of your theology. Your answer might surprise you. It might be absolutely incorrect. In which case, you may have to visit the Gospel all over again. But, whatever your answer may be, rest assured Rome has its answer. As a matter of fact, more time and energy has been spent by theologians of Rome in answering this question than any other. This question was at the heart of the Protestant Reformation. It needs to be asked by each and every new generation. All of our attempts to answer it drive us into the essence of all theological thought.

Stirring the Pot!

Most Christians have been taught rightly that justification is through faith apart from works of law. Some have distilled the formula rightly down to *Sola Fide* i.e., justification by faith alone. But not much attention is given to what this means. Does it mean that justification is according to the richness of my own faith? Or does it mean that justification is according to the faith I may have that God will reward my good works? Or does it mean that justification is according to my faith that God will accept me just the way that I am? Or does it mean that justification is according to faith that God is merciful to me as I have faith that He will reward me for what I can do for Him? The simple formula, *Sola Fide*, must be fleshed out. It is in this “fleshing out” process that we run headlong into Roman Catholic theology and an array of theological energy emanating from the inspired pen of the apostle Paul.

Setting the Stage

Roman Catholic theologians, as well as Christian theologians, have sought to penetrate the depths of the relationship between grace/faith and law/works in the Bible, particularly the writings of the apostle Paul. In so doing, Rome has disqualified itself as a Christian Church because it has given the wrong answers to a complex of theological questions culminating in the response given by Rome to our query above. Rome continues to believe the wrong answer and defend its miss as well! But this is not to suggest that Rome has not seen the problems which come from asking the right questions. Indeed, Rome has seen the tensions and tried to remedy them. In fact, it is somewhat troublesome that Rome has been better at asking the right questions than many professing Christians. Perhaps it is long over due for Christians in our generation to ask these questions publicly and without fear offer a defense for the hope that is within. We thank God that these questions have been asked by many in times past. We are not alone in our inquiry.

The Hang-Up

In a very simplified nutshell, Roman Catholicism is an attempt to satisfy the relationship between law/works and grace/faith. That there exists some tension can be seen by setting side by side the writings of Paul.

“But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man *according to his deeds*” [ROM 2:5,6](#). “for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but *the doers of the Law* will be justified.” [ROM 2:13](#)

It appears that God will have a righteous judgement wherein one's entry into heaven is suspended upon the amount of "doing the law" or "good deeds" he has done! Such an evaluation appears to be the teaching of the apostle in [Romans 2](#). Read carefully [Romans 2:7](#).

"to those who by perseverance **in doing good** seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; [ROM 2:7](#) [emphasis ours]"

These verses are not lost on Roman Catholic writers:

"[Romans 2:5–10](#) shows that in Paul's view, God saves or condemns based on works performed by the individual. We see this clearly in his remark, verse [7](#), that God will give "*eternal life*" to those who "*persist in good work*." ([Not by Faith Alone](#), Bob Sungenis, Queen-ship Publishing, 1997 pg. 36)

But on the other hand, the same apostle writes words which seem to contradict. Let us read carefully the great apostle in another portion of Scripture.

"For we maintain that a man is justified by faith *apart from works* of the Law." [ROM 3:28](#)

"nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and *not by the works of the Law*; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified." [GAL 2:16](#)

"just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness *apart from works*" [ROM 4:6](#)

There is an apparent contradiction of thought between these passages which begs for some sort of reconciliation. This too is not lost on Roman Catholic writers:

"How to regard [Romans 2:5–10](#), with its explicit teaching that the individual receives eternal life as a reward for his work, has been one of the most difficult questions faced by Protestant theology." (Sungenis pg. 37)

We Need To Give An Answer

There have been several attempts by Christian commentators to reconcile Paul in [Romans 2](#) with Paul in [Romans 3](#). We need to be open and honest. There is a great deal of tension attached to a normal reading of these Bible passages. However, in this article we shall confine our analysis to the Roman Catholic solution to these tensions. In our next article we will interact with Christian responses. There is too much at stake to be hasty. We need to think carefully weighing Scripture circumspectly.

Rome Resolves The Tension

Rome views "good works" done in faith as part of the righteousness contemplated by God in the verdict of justification. To them, this satisfies their reading of Paul in [Romans 2](#). However, Rome must satisfy equally those passages which appear to forbid the introduction of good works

as the ground of justification. So, in one way or another, Rome mixes works and grace together in order to reconcile what appears to be contradictory assertions by the apostle. However, Rome is acutely aware that the apostle Paul forbids the mixing of the two as if they were the same. Rome seeks for a way in which good works *can be meritorious* without disrupting the principle of salvation by grace. Rome is aware of [Romans 11](#).

“But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.” [ROM 11:6](#)

Some Roman Catholic apologists content themselves with believing that the apostle Paul only excludes the law of Israel in his triumphant articulation of justification by grace through faith and not of works! These writers are convinced that Paul is taking away Jewish Law for justification but not good works done in faith. Hence, the idea for them is to “think Jewish Law” every time they read Paul excluding “works of law” for justification.

This position has been consistently undermined and overthrown by Christian theologians who appeal to [Romans 4](#) and the life of Abraham. Clearly Abraham lived long before “Jewish Law” and his justification cannot be said to exclude only Jewish Law! For, there was no such thing at the time of his acquittal. Surely Abraham was justified apart from his own good works.

Romans 4: The Battlefield

Rome is backed up to the wall in [Romans 4](#). Here Paul is unequivocal. He gives two classic illustrations of the ungodly. The first is Abraham and the second is David. In each case, the verdict of justification is determined without consideration of good works done in faith or personal righteousness of either party.

“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered.” [Romans 4:2–7](#)

Unable to use the argument that Paul wishes to exclude only “Jewish Law” as the ground of justification, Rome re-directs our thinking to a different solution. This solution enables Rome to hold to a justification *not by faith alone* while preserving grace alone. Or so it is alleged. It is the thesis of Rome that the “works” of [Romans 4](#), excluded by Paul in the verdict of justification, do not represent all works. Rather, says Rome, the “works” denied by the apostle Paul, as part of the decree of justification, in the case of Abraham and David, are only “works” of a strict obligatory contract. Rome understands Paul to forbid only “works” that place a debt on God. In other words, Rome is convinced that Paul is only forbidding “works” which, by their working, infer that God owes them something.

It is Rome’s contention that Paul is only excluding something we may call “raw law keeping” from the formula of justification. Raw law keeping is doomed to failure because it attempts to put God in an obligatory relationship which demands that God serve up justification based upon “works done.” This is doomed to failure because of man’s sinfulness. Man’s best

efforts are sin-tainted and imperfect. This is doomed as well because no man can do all that the law requires. He will fail. So Rome understands [Romans 4](#) as teaching an exclusion only of contractual law keeping that would demand of God merit for justification. **It is absolutely critical for Christians to understand that Romish writers see in [Romans 4](#) only a denial of man's attempts to obligate God with his good works. Rome does not see a denial of "good works" accepted by God, in a grace relationship, as part of the ground of their justification.**

Hence, Abraham and David could not ever have been justified by works that obligate God to repay them. This would be likened to an employee employer kind of relationship. The employee works to put the employer at his debt and can demand a wage. Rome says that this is only what the apostle Paul forbids in [Romans 4](#). Rome insists that there is no room for grace in this kind of relationship if the debt is due. Thus, Rome sees Paul eliminating only a wages due, contractual relationship with God for justification. Rome maintains in the analogy that if God is the employer, He would not be in a grace relationship and only would give what is due the worker. Rome sees this as impossible since man cannot work perfectly. Man would be doomed to be in such a relationship. Rome is convinced that Paul is excluding only this kind of non-grace relationship in [Romans 4](#). This paves the way for Rome to assert a good works done in faith, within a grace relationship, formula for justification. Rome is making room for grace while preserving good works.

Rome escapes into its grace/works system of justification having dealt with any objections found in [Romans 4](#). The escape is complete when Rome views man as having an altogether different relationship with God under its sacramental system. When once baptized in Rome, God is not an impersonal employer giving out wages due His workers. God is rather a benevolent Father accepting the best we can offer and counting our "good works" toward our justification. God can do this because He is now in a grace relationship. Or so it is alleged. But is this the teaching of [Romans 4](#)? We answer, it is not!

We submit that the teaching of [Romans 4](#) is the opposite of what is proclaimed by Roman Catholic apologists. The burden of the apostle Paul is to set forth a justification from God that excludes boasting. It is not to set forth a justification from God that excludes obligatory debt. While it is true that obligatory debt is inconceivable for our justification, this is not the primary teaching of the passage. Furthermore, the apostle only uses the concept of obligatory debt as illustrative of what God *has not done* in justifying the ungodly. Paul does not bring up obligatory debt in order to exclude it from the justification of the ungodly per se. Obligatory debt serves a broader purpose in the passage. It is not the focus of the apostle. In fact, there is no denigration of obligatory debt in the context of [Romans 4](#). It serves as a background of the opposite of what God has done in justifying the ungodly. God does not deal with the ungodly as an employer would deal with his employee. This is not to say that the employer is wrong in paying a wage due. This is to say that God does not do this in His justification of the ungodly. Let us observe what Paul says:

“Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works” ROM 4:4–6.

For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. ROM 4:2.

In **Romans 3:27** Paul asks the rhetorical question, “where then is boasting?” His response is that it is excluded by the law of faith. The burden of the apostle is to show forth a justification by God that absolutely eliminates all boasting of any kind. If Abraham were justified by works he would have something to boast about. But that is not the way God justifies. Furthermore, so deep is Paul’s commitment to the grace of God that even normal hard work-good wage relationships fall far short of what God has done in justifying the ungodly. There is nothing wrong with work for pay. There is nothing wrong with good works. But neither relationship is analogous to what God has done in justifying the ungodly. Some one might boast of his good works which could be construed as the reason for his justification. Someone else may reason that he earned his justification. Neither of these patterns measures up however to what God has done. God has justified the one not working at all in order that it might be shown to be a favor for all eternity.

“Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned *as a favor*, but as what is due.”
ROM 4:4 [emphasis ours].

Rome’s error is in defining the *nature* of God’s favor. Rome teaches that God has committed Himself to accept good works done in faith as part of the ground in the justification of the ungodly. Rome is anxious to insert grace and favor but only with the *inclusion* of good works, done appropriately, outside of an obligatory contractual relationship with God. Christians see this as an end run to avoid the clear teaching of the text. The text stands forcefully against Rome. There is not a hint of “acceptable works” performed in a “grace relationship” for justification here. Also, Rome constrains the apostle to eliminate what Rome itself constructs. There is no hint that Paul has in mind the extinction of only Rome’s artificial contractual/obligatory works model of justification. The apostle knows of no such refinement in this passage. He simply says that *all* boasting is eliminated. This means each and every kind of work is excluded in the verdict of justification as well. Any kind of work, under any circumstance, is conceived by the apostle as a destruction of the essence of grace. Favor loses its meaning if work of any ilk [no matter how attractive to man the formula may seem] leaks into the equation of how God justifies the ungodly. To miss this point is to miss the Gospel!

Rome’s answer to the question, “What is the righteousness contemplated by God in the verdict of justification?”, remains faith *plus good works* done in faith outside of an obligatory contractual relationship. In place of an obligatory contractual relationship, Rome offers a grace-dispensing relationship whereby God is said to accept good works along with faith as the ground of justification. This, they say, satisfies Paul’s insistence that God will render to every man according to his deeds. We believe Rome is wrong and has missed the Gospel.

The Spirit of ECT [Evangelicals and Catholics Together] and The Emperor’s New Clothes

By Robert Michael Zins

We have spent a good deal of energy evaluating the writings of Mr. Charles Colson (see our *Edge of Apostasy*) and the modern ecumenical mind set. We have been howling from the top of the rafters that this man could very well be the most dangerous person in the world. But how

can a mild-mannered older gentleman who has devoted his life to having a “human touch” outreach to criminals be considered so perilous? Is it appropriate to even consider raising an objection to this man whom some have called the leading spokesperson of the 20th century evangelicals? We think so.

Mr. Colson is so ominous to us because of his ability to influence others to betray the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We stand amazed that so many people, who should know better, have given this man an audience. Mr. Colson appears to be well received everywhere. According to Jerry Moser and the Raden Report, a conservative Southern Baptist watch-dog newsletter, Mr. Colson is not only received by the Southern Baptist Convention but highly touted and even promoted.

This is exasperating! It seems to us that Charles Colson, and those who follow him, parallels the story of the emperor who was tricked into thinking he was wearing beautiful new clothes when in fact he was naked. As the story goes this emperor was hoodwinked into believing that his new clothes would be invisible to only those terribly stupid or those unfit for their positions in life. No one dared to say that they did not see the new clothes. Eventually the emperor strutted around stark naked because even he did not dare admit that he too could not see the non-existent clothes. No one dared tell him he was naked for fear of the emperor. The emperor dared not tell anyone for fear that he would be thought terribly stupid or unfit for his position. Finally a little boy blurted out, “Why is the emperor naked?” The bubble was burst and the shame was great that day.

Well Mr. Colson is running around stark naked. He thinks he is clothed with the Gospel. Those who agree must be afraid to say that there are no Gospel garments on his body. Could it be that many are afraid of being called terribly stupid or unfit for their position should they state the obvious?

Now, chilling affirmation of Mr. Colson’s ongoing charade comes to us in the form of an article written in *First Things*, a Roman Catholic magazine edited by Richard John Neuhaus. The article entitled: *Modernist Impasse, Christian Opportunity* is an incredible piece of propaganda using the backdrop of the Columbine killings to ease us into a new world order wherein theological unity is both the ticket and the end destination. Mr. Colson is buoyed by the apparent decline in the humanist world view that has produced autonomous chaos in our country. Sensing that the western world is fed up with a relativism that produces crass individualism, Colson sees some light at the end of the tunnel. So, he implores Christians [his understanding of Christians] to seize the day and fill the void left by the death of modernism that could only produce the Harrises and Klebolds of this world.

Colson neatly slides into a comparison of two world views on stage at Columbine. On the one hand are the antagonist anarchists Klebold and Harris. On the other hand are those of faith. Rachel Scott and Cassie Bernall did not deny their faith and consequently were killed. In the aftermath, Colson wishes to focus our attention on those “incredible church services, both Protestant and Catholic, which exalted Jesus.”

When set in this type of emotional and high-strung atmosphere, who in their right mind would ever chide such a beautiful contrast between “people of faith” and cold blooded killers? Mr. Colson knows this is the perfect lead-in for his ultimate agenda.

But, however our hearts are ripped apart from cold blooded acts of violence where people are killed in satanic rage, we must protest the use of such imagery. In fact we denounce it. Why? Because, Colson has used the imagery of “religious people” to torment the Gospel. How?

In the first place, Roman Catholics do not believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They worship a God of their imagination. Their services are centered upon a mystical Jesus who is radically

opposite of the Jesus found in the Scriptures. We wonder out loud if such high praise would have come forth from Mr. Colson if it had been a Mormon girl who had not denied her faith in the face of death. We wonder if the same sentiment would have been Colson's lead-in if the victim had been a Jehovah Witness taking a bullet instead of denying her faith. Our point is that Mr. Colson really and truly believes that Roman Catholicism is Christianity. The post-death religious exercises that take place in a Protestant Church or Roman Catholic Church make no difference to Chuck Colson. In his mind, they are both Christian and we are urged to see the beauty of their common faith juxtaposed with that of nihilism.

There is no doubt that Mr. Colson is a cultural activist with a highly conservative agenda. The trouble is that Mr. Colson obliterates the Gospel of Jesus Christ in his driven attempts at changing the culture. He is obsessed with transforming our culture and that fixation has blinded him. He cannot see that he is selling out the Gospel. He is going way beyond the forging of what some would call "unholy" alliances. Mr. Colson is not content with co-belligerency [different religious groups fighting together for common social causes]. He wishes to re-define Christianity altogether. Mr. Colson wants nothing less than the full affirmation that Roman Catholicism is Christian. He goes further. He wants Rome to take the lead and evangelicals to get in line! Listen to these chilling words:

"Today, we must, in every discipline, in many and varied contexts, and with a spirit of mutual love and encouragement, reach across confessional divides and present together a rational and biblical view of life, that can reach our desperate neighbors and transform our culture." (Article, June 2000 - First Things)

Mr. Colson goes on to write that Christianity is primarily a worldview. He says it is much more than a matter of personal conversion and much more than liturgy. It is, in Colson's opinion, a way of comprehending reality. Herein lies another fundamental error Christianity is not a worldview. Christianity is a deep and abiding relationship with God through faith alone in the finished work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ in His people and His own people in Christ *produces* a world view that cannot be shared ultimately by those outside of Christ. For any worldview which views God and His provision of salvation incorrectly is a faulty worldview no matter how conservative it is. Mr. Colson wishes to take back this culture in the name of the King of Kings. Yet, this is empty rhetoric. It is baubles and bubbles. Who is this King of Kings? What has been revealed about this King of Kings? What is the Gospel of this King of Kings? How do we take back the culture in the name of the King of Kings who alone is able to conquer the hearts of men? How do we take back this culture in the name of the King of Kings without the message of salvation? What would a Roman Catholic answer a thousand Philippian jailors and a million prisoners who ask, "what must I do to be saved?" Mr. Colson has been in hundreds of prisons. Does he tell people that they can be saved from eternal damnation if they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and then leave it to them as to *what* they should believe *about* Jesus and His Gospel? Maybe so. But this is not Christianity. Rest assured, when Christianity *is* spoken then Rome is silenced. And if Rome is silenced then they are not allies in the battle to take back our culture in name of the King of Kings! They are just the opposite. They are enemies of the cross of Christ. How would Mr. Colson conquer the culture for the King of Kings using the weapons of Christ's enemies?

Mr. Colson likes to make statements such as, "...we are enabled to see beyond those divisions, [deep divisions that remain between communities] as important as they are, when our focus is upon the great contours of Christian truth as it is presented and defended in the world."

Yet, our focus is upon the Gospel and Rome does not have it. We are not comforted by some nebulous elocution featuring “contours of Christian truth presented and defended in the world.” What does this mean? It is nothing more than a smoke screen and the emperor is still naked.

So, in light of the fact that Rome teaches baptismal regeneration, sacramental salvation, incremental justification [through condign merit], papal infallibility, Mary as a sinless co-redemptrix, purgatory [between heaven and hell], infused grace, eating a literal Christ [as a piece of bread after representing it as an unbloody sacrifice for sins] and indulgences (to mention a few of Rome’s erroneous teachings), how is Colson doing in the selling of this nefarious religion as Christian?

Listen to his own words and then ask yourself what you can do to help stop it all and not be afraid to say, “the emperor has no clothes!”

“Now the spirit of ECT is spreading around the world. A group similar to ours has been meeting for several years in the Republic of Ireland. Just recently, I received an invitation to speak to a group of churches in Nebraska. This group, comprising several Protestant churches of various denominations and a number of Roman Catholic churches, has been meeting together to discuss how to put ECT into practice. In South America, Evangelical leaders have been meeting with the Catholic Bishops Conference, and just recently the two issued their first joint statement. And just a few weeks ago, in Sofia, Bulgaria, the ministries of Prison Fellowship International came together for our international convocation. On the closing night, the host ministry, which is heavily influenced by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, held the communion service. Unconsecrated bread was shared by Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox believers in a spirit of celebrating the great truths held in common in Christ.” (Ibid)

What is lost in all of this is the Gospel. We have no common faith with these folks, or Mr. Colson, until they address the issue of the true Gospel.

Dominus Iesus: Rome Exalts Her Throne A Kiss of Death for the Ecumenists

Richard M. Bennett

It has been but a short time since Charles Colson, like some modern-day Chamberlain alighting from his aircraft, held aloft “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” and declared, “Peace in our time.” It has been a mere six years; yet the folly of their deeds, apparent to many before, has now been made apparent to all. We can only conclude that if the “evangelicals” who signed that notorious document do not denounce the Vatican, then their act was not one of wishful thinking, but willful betrayal. Rome has dropped her mask; the empty ecumenical charade has ended, and therefore it is time for those who love God’s word to sound the alarm in earnest. *Let us play the man, for our people, and for the cities of our God.*

On September 5th 2000, the RC document “DOMINUS IESUS”¹ (DI) was issued by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.² Carrying the full

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http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html

authority of an official Vatican decree, it declares the Roman Catholic Church to be the only “instrument for the salvation of all humanity.” DI has been “ratified and confirmed” by “The **Sovereign** Pontiff John Paul II.”³ Even Catholic priests are alarmed by DI. *The Irish Independent* newspaper states,

“Members of National Conference of Priests of Ireland (NCPI) whose parishes are located in Northern Ireland, expressed dismay at the timing of such a document; Father Michael Hackett said:

‘I went to a meeting with some Protestant clergymen just after the document was published - their level of anger was terrible. ... the document has been like a bomb being dropped into the middle of the cross-faith relations we are trying to build.’ Another member said: ‘The tone and timing of this document published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith could not have been expressed at a worse time. We (the Catholic Church) are being both reactionary and defensive.’”⁴

The “timing”!!? Is there a better “timing” for betrayal? They were “dismayed” at the document’s timing, not its meaning; they were upset at its tone, not its content. But *this is your hour and the power of darkness*. Also, to what are they “being both reactionary and defensive”? Overtones of peace? When a lion roars at the sheep, he is not being defensive and reactionary.

Clearly, the numerous ecumenists of “The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” (JD) of last year and the signers and endorsers of ECT 1 & 2 are now not in limbo but rather in no man’s land. Did Colson and his fellow ecumenists really believe that the Pope will simply fade into the shadows and allow “evangelicals” to exercise themselves independently of his will? Do they think the rhetoric of the Vatican and the witness of history to be empty forerunners; are they as hoodwinked as that generation which had *Mein Kampf* in their hands and Hitler in their midst, but saw no connection?

Roman Catholic Supremacy

In Section 17, DI speaks of the RCC as the “Primacy, which, according to the will of God, the Bishop of Rome objectively has and exercises over the entire Church.” This presumed Primacy is the arrogant underpinning of the whole document, flouting the Lord’s commandment, “*The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them ... But ye shall not be so.*”⁵ Rome in 2000 speaks as did the infamous Boniface VIII in 1302, “Furthermore we declare, say, define, and proclaim to every human creature that they by necessity for salvation are entirely subject to the

² Formerly known as the Office of the Inquisition, then the Holy Office, it is still housed in the same building in Rome as it had been during those horrendous centuries of torture and death when it carried out the papal decrees.

³ Scriptures speak of One Supreme Sovereign Head of the Church: the All Holy, Unchangeable, All-Powerful, All Knowing, All Wise Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ http://www.unison.ie/irish_independent/

⁵ [Luke 22:25–26](#).

Roman Pontiff.”⁶The dominant presupposition of Rome is that the Lord set up a totalitarian hierarchy of Pope, cardinals (of which Ratzinger is high on the list), patriarchs, major archbishops, archbishops, metropolitans, coadjutor archbishops, diocesan bishops, coadjutor bishops, etc. This is the spirit of Diotrephes, “*who loves to have the preeminence,*” gone mad. The Biblical organizational structure of the bride of Christ is utterly different. In the true body of Christ, those ordained as elders and deacons are still only brothers within the same body and the one Master is Jesus Christ the Lord. “*For one is your master even Christ and ye are all brethren.*” (Mt. 23:8)

Part of the same hierarchical presupposition is expressed in DI, Section 16, “...the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him....” Presumed in this declaration is the idea that Peter went to Rome, was her first bishop, and subsequently, the bishops of Rome have by “apostolic succession” retained his prerogatives and more. The assumption is groundless. In Biblical history there is no mention of Peter ever visiting Rome. The RC position is completely inconsistent with the recorded commission that the Apostle Peter was to take the Gospel to the Jews⁷ as was the Apostle Paul to the Gentiles⁸, including those in Rome.

Nowhere in Scripture is there any suggestion of the existence of an “apostolic succession”. In the New Testament, the Apostles appointed elders⁹ and deacons, not a line of apostles. There is no Biblical text for these power-endowing statements of DI. Rather the papacy alone declares by fiat that it is so. The papacy now is nothing less than the head of the apostate church depicted in Scripture, ravenous for power, the Woman who is seated upon the beast reigning “over” peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.¹⁰

Such arrogance as the presumed “Primacy, which...the Bishop of Rome objectively has and exercises over the entire Church” is mind-boggling. Irish Catholic author Peter de Rosa, in his book *Vicars of Christ: The Dark Side of the Papacy*, summarizes the basic mindset behind such statements,

“...John Paul presents the papacy as the champion of truth and the rights of man. He takes it for granted that popes have never contradicted one another on essentials or deviated from Gospel truth.... Apart from the fact that the tenth- and fifteenth-century papacy was *the* heresy, *the* denial of everything Jesus stood for, many popes have made astonishing errors. They have repeatedly contradicted one another and the Gospel.... History explodes the myth of a papacy lily-white in the matter of truth. In an age of barbarism, the popes led the pack; in an age of enlightenment, they trailed the field. And their record was worst when, contrary to the Gospel, they tried to impose the [RC] truth by force.”¹¹

⁶ Denzinger, Henry, “Unam Sanctum”, Nov. 18, 1302, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, Tr. By Roy J. Deferrari, 30th Ed. of Enchiridion Symbolorum, rev. by Karl Rahner, S. J. (St Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1957) #469.

⁷ Galatians 2:7–8.

⁸ Acts 13:46–48, 18:6; Rom:1:5, 11:13; Gal:1:16; I Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11.

⁹ The terms overseer and elder/pastor are used interchangeably (Acts 20:17, 28; I Peter 5:1–4).

¹⁰ Revelation 17:15.

¹¹ Peter de Rosa, *Vicars of Christ: The Dark Side of the Papacy* (New York, NY 10003: Crown Publishers, 1988) p. 151.

Submission of Intellect and Will

In Section 4, in one sentence of 170 words, DI states that the root of the problem to unity and salvation is “the tendency to read and to interpret Sacred Scripture outside the Tradition and Magisterium of the Church.” This means that the bottom line of DI is the stipulated demand to submit one’s entire mind to an earthly fallible authority that claims to be infallible. In the official word of Rome, “A religious respect of intellect and will, even if not the assent of faith, is to be paid to the teaching which the Supreme Pontiff...enuntiate[s] on faith or morals...”¹² Moreover, she pronounces that the consequence for not obeying is punishment with a “just penalty”.¹³

The Lord himself looked to the authority of the Scriptures alone, as did His Apostles after Him. The Biblical message breathed out by God is revelation in written form (II Tim. 3:15–16). The Biblical claim is that what God has inspired was His written word (II Pet. 1:20–21). When the Lord Jesus Christ said, “*the Scripture cannot be broken*” (John 10:35), He was speaking of God’s authoritative written word. The events, actions, commandments, and truths from God are given in propositional, i.e. logical, written sentences. God’s declaration in Scripture is that it, and it alone, is the final authority in all matters of faith and morals. Thus there is only one written source from God, there is only one basis of truth for the Lord’s people. Against the Section 4 claimed precept of not to believe “outside the Tradition and Magisterium of the Church” is the command of the Scripture not to think above what is written: “...*that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.*” (I Cor. 4:6). *God...in these last days hath spoken unto us through His Son*, and not through the Pope’s ex cathedra pronouncements nor through the Magisterium of the Church of Rome!

Engineering of Concepts

The key catchword of DI is the word “salvific”. It is repeated in obtuse yet clever sentences 39 times! Many of the statements concerning the role of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in salvation are Biblically correct. However these truthful concepts are used as a camouflage behind which Rome manufactures her claim that Christ’s “salvific” work is in the RC Church. Thus Section 16 of DI asserts, “Therefore, the fullness of Christ’s salvific mystery belongs also to the Church, inseparably united to her Lord.” And, “The Lord Jesus, the only Saviour, did not only establish a simple community of disciples, but constituted the Church as a salvific mystery: he himself is in the Church...” This claim that Christ’s salvation belongs to and is in the RC Church is based on a faulty definition of salvation. Continually Rome states that justification makes one inwardly just, for example, “Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his

¹² *Code of Canon Law*, Eng.-Latin ed. (Wash., DC: Canon Law Soc. of America, 1983) Can. 752. All canons taken from this work unless so stated.

¹³ Canon 1371, Para. 1 The following are to be punished with a just penalty: 1 a person who, teaches a doctrine condemned by the Roman Pontiff, or by an Ecumenical Council, or obstinately rejects the teachings mentioned in canon 750, [Para.] 2 or in canon 752 and, when warned by the Apostolic See or by the Ordinary, does not retract....”

mercy.”¹⁴ Such a concept of a supposed righteousness within the soul by means of a physical sacrament makes this identification of salvation and the RC Church seemingly possible. The Biblical Word declares that salvation is in “*the righteousness of God*”¹⁵, “*the righteousness of the one*”, “*the obedience of the one*”¹⁶, “*the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*”¹⁷ Biblical truth makes the DI statement that “Christ constituted the Church as a salvific mystery” impossible. The “*righteousness of God*” credited to the believer is not on earth, let alone identified with any church. [Ephesians 1:3–14](#) makes clear that such blessed righteousness is in heavenly places in Christ alone. In Section 17, DI quotes from another document¹⁸ the RC precept, “The Christian faithful are therefore not permitted to imagine...” Speculation is out of the question, ‘lock-step’ thinking and behavior alone will be tolerated. “Sieg Heil!” echoes through the corridors of the faithful. Dredging the very depths of deception in the ecclesiastical engineering of concepts, Section 16 speaks of “the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church”. *Their habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me.* Scripture speaks of only One who is full of grace and truth, His name: the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁹

Engineering As Lived Out

As Catholics live it out, the “salvific mystery...in the church” is a long journey through the Sacrifice of the Mass, sacraments, good works, merit, worship of Mary and the saints, etc. One is required to partake of the “salvific mystery” in order to be good enough to die in “sanctifying grace” and then to be saved, or at least, for the majority, to land for a time in purgatory. (We are left to wonder how “full” is that measure of grace found within the Catholic Church, how ‘perfect’ is her sacrifice of the Mass, how hopeful are “the last rites,” if their accomplishments are so miniscule as to send souls to a psuedo-hell?)

The same Section 16 states, “This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in [subsistit in] the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him.” It is the constant ploy of the RC Church to focus a person’s faith for salvation to the RCC herself. In her words, “There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive. There is no one, however wicked and guilty, who may not confidently hope for forgiveness, provided his repentance is honest.”²⁰ In Scripture, salvation is mediated through Jesus Christ alone, the only mediator between God and man ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#), [1 Tim. 2:5](#)). The instrument of salvation is not a church but rather faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*”²¹ “*However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, his*

¹⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1994) Para.1992. Hereafter CCC.

¹⁵ [Romans 3:21](#).

¹⁶ [Romans 5:18–19](#).

¹⁷ [2 Peter 1:1](#).

¹⁸ DI footnote # 64 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, 1.

¹⁹ [John 1:14](#).

²⁰ CCC, Para. 982.

²¹ [Acts 16:31](#).

*faith is credited as righteousness.*²² The boundaries of salvation are all of God, and not that of any church, to demonstrate in the words of the Apostle that He is “*just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*”.²³ The precincts of salvation are outlined in [Romans 3:24](#), “*being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*” showing that God’s grace is the efficient cause, and the payment is “*through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*” To attempt to bring the RCC into the nature of the salvific work of the Godhead, indeed, to make it the fount of that work is speaking against God. It is blasphemy. In Scripture, salvation is in Christ Jesus alone, “*to the praise of the glory of his grace.*”²⁴

DI and the Gospel

While Bible texts mandating the preaching of the Gospel are given in DI, the Gospel itself is not.²⁵ Instead it defines the Gospel as “the fullness of the truth which God has enabled us to know about himself”. The definition is a good description of what the written Word of God is, but it is not an explanation of the Gospel, which is what is at stake.

The Apostle Paul declares precisely what the Gospel is, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth... For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*” ([Rom. 1:16–17](#)) What Rome declares in DI is not “*the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith*” granted to the believer, neither is it “*the power of God unto salvation.*”²⁶ Rather in Section 7 of DI, Rome is bold enough to proclaim that “those who are baptized in these communities [ie., non-Catholic churches] are, by Baptism, incorporated in Christ” and “Baptism in fact tends per se toward the full development of life in Christ...” Such cleverness is in accord with her insistence in her official teaching that salvation is given in Baptism, “... The [RC] Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude...” “By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin.”²⁷

In Section 21, she now has the same effrontery, as did the Inquisition and the Council of Trent, to state that there is a “divine origin” and salvific power to her sacraments. Thus DI states, “One cannot attribute to ‘various religious traditions’ a divine origin or an *ex opere operato* salvific efficacy, which is proper to the Christian sacraments.” This is in accord with what she claims in her “infallible” council²⁸, “If anyone shall say that by the said sacraments of the New Law, grace is not conferred from the work which has been worked [*ex opere operato*] but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices to obtain grace: let him be anathema.”²⁹ What is compromised in DI is the Gospel itself. The warning of Scripture still stands, “*As we said before,*

²² [Romans 4:5](#).

²³ [Romans 3:26](#).

²⁴ [Ephesians 1:6](#).

²⁵ While the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople are quoted, these are statements to echo the Biblical historical background to the Gospel not the Gospel itself.

²⁶ [Romans 1:16](#).

²⁷ CCC, Para. 1263 & Para. 1257

²⁸ CCC, Para. 891.

²⁹ Denzinger, #851, Canon 8.

so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:9)

Outside Rome, No church!

The Roman Catholic Church boldly proclaims in Section 17, “On the other hand, the ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, **are not Churches in the proper sense...**” Indeed this is ominous; as the Nazis declared non-Aryans to be non-humans, so now Rome declares other churches “not Churches in the proper sense”. In the words of the Apostle Peter, indeed this sounds as the voice of “*a roaring lion*”. The statement is directed against all post-Reformation churches, including the Lutherans and Anglicans, so that in DI is boldly stated Rome’s hard-line position regarding those whom she designates as “separated brethren”.³⁰ Had those being drawn into ecumenism and dialogue done any serious study of her major documents and history, they would have found that the RCC has had this iron-clad mindset all along. For her, the only true Church sits on the Seven Hills of Rome; the only successful dialogue is to come back into her arms. Thus Vatican Council II’s post conciliar Document No. 42 on ecumenism had already stated that “...dialogue is not an end in itself...it is not just an academic discussion.”³¹ Rather, “ecumenical dialogue...serves to transform modes of thought and behavior and the daily life of those [non-Catholic] communities. In this way, it aims at preparing the way for their unity of faith in the bosom of a Church one and visible.”³² Transform them it must, for there is no “equality” in the “doctrinal content” that other churches have brought to the table. The Papal Primacy in a forceful inquisitorial manner is saying the same thing: come back to “Holy Mother,” otherwise we will treat you as a non-church. Confident Ecumenizers need to rethink their position: Their base in groups defined by Rome as “Churches not in the proper sense” leaves them without power because they have compromised the Gospel and the authority of Scripture alone.

Ecumenists come to the table empty handed

Rome is, in her own words, *semper eadem*, always the same. She claims that she is infallible and that to her is to be given submission of intellect and will. Her present day *Code of Canon Law* has not changed her penalties for crimes against her system; rather, they are now clearer than ever. Accepted by most civil powers in the present world, she is becoming more brazen, as DI reveals. She is accepted as a recognized civil and religious body by many civil governments, and in some nations is legally declared so by their very constitutions.

As the Roman Catholic Church’s influence increasingly shapes civil law in the European Union, Biblically based churches there are being legally classified as sects; already there are reports of this from Europe. The *Sunday Telegraph*, 25th August 1991, noted, “If European federalism triumphs, the EC [European Community] will indeed be an empire. It will lack an

³⁰ No. 32, “Decree on Ecumenism” (Unitatis Redintegratio) 21 Nov. 1964, *Vatican. Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Austin Flannery, Gen. Ed. (Northport, NY: Costello Publ. Co., 1975) Vol. I., p. 456.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 549

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 540–1.

emperor: but it will have the Pope...it is difficult not to think that Wojtyla [John Paul II] realises this.”³³In Can. 1404, the Pope claims immunity from all moral and civil authority, “The First See is judged by no one.” In DI he stipulates complete Primacy of “grace and truth” for himself and his Church. In #882 of the new *Catechism*, the Pope purports to take for himself the Lord Jesus Christ’s divine position: “For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, namely, and as pastor of the entire Church, has full, supreme and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.” He is the worst enemy of Christ who under the pretense of service to Christ, presumes to undermine His unique offices by covertly usurping His position and power.

The table is set for a most interesting response to DI. Rome declares that there are “just penalties” for those who will not bend the knee to her. These ecumenists best beware lest they change their minds. Present day canon law shows what offenses she considers punishable. Nonetheless, the ecumenists are playing against a stacked deck. No matter what promises of a compromise are held out to them, Sect. 22 of DI states, “Equality, which is a presupposition of inter-religious dialogue, refers to the equal personal dignity of the parties in the dialogue, not to doctrinal content.” In other words, they have come empty handed to the table, unknowingly facing Canon 1369,

“A person who uses a public show or speech, published writings, or other media of social communication to blaspheme, seriously damage good morals, express wrongs against religion or against the Church or stir up hatred or contempt against religion or the Church is to be punished with a just penalty.”

(In an article on these “just penalties” of Rome, an official commentator states, “While a certain type of diversity clearly enriches the Church, it simply cannot tolerate certain divergent patterns of thought or activity....”)³⁴

“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate”

In DI the Self Exalted Throne of Rome upholds the “Primacy... the Bishop of Rome objectively has and exercises over the entire Church” while condemning “The tendency to read and to interpret Sacred Scripture outside the Tradition and Magisterium of the Church.” At complete variance to this is the Word of the Lord Christ Jesus, “*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” The same self-asserted “Sovereign” and “Infallible” Power declares, “The Christian faithful are therefore not permitted to imagine...” The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul commands, “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*”³⁵

The Supreme Pontiff purportedly being Sovereign and possessing “infallible teaching authority”³⁶ is of vast importance to Rome. Satan knew well the worth of that word “infallible”. He carried it off to Rome, that they might claim it as theirs in infallible decrees, infallible councils, and infallible vicars of Christ, and now their infallible DI. Such blasphemous

³³ Adrian Hilton, *The Principality and Power of Europe: Britain and the Emerging Holy European Empire* (Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 5SJ, England: Dorchester House Publications, 1997) p. 18.

³⁴ *Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary* (Paulist Press, 1985) p. 894.

³⁵ Gal. 5:1

³⁶ Can. 749, Sec. 1.

presumption we know the “*Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming,*”³⁷ we would wonder the earth does not swallow them up as it did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. As Bible believers, the infallibility in which we rejoice is that of the God of all truth, expressed in His written Word. Manifested in the same infallible Word is “the God of all grace” who seeks, finds, and saves His people. All the members of Christ are secure in Him. None can pluck them from Him. All the purposes of Divine grace are infallibly settled. And all that the Father gave Christ Jesus the Lord will be surely brought home, to behold His glory and see Him as He is.

These things are written with deep respect and care, because the salvation of many is involved. The Lord faced the sincere and devout Pharisees with a very strong word. They like many present-day Catholics they were making Tradition equal to the authority of the Written Word and “*establishing their own righteousness*” were not counting on God’s grace alone. The Lord said to those Pharisees of His own day, “*if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins.*” If anyone continues to hold to the Roman Catholic Church’s teaching authority, and her “salvific” righteousness he likewise will die in his sins. The Lord Christ Jesus died in place of the believer, the One for the many (Mark 10:45). His life and finished sacrifice alone are the ransom for the believer. As He declared, “*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.*”

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The Roman Catholic Church in History: Part I

By the late Dr. Walter R. Martin

The Papacy — Was Peter The First Pope?

In order to understand Catholic theology and psychology, we must recognize that Rome maintains that she alone is the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. We must also know what the Roman Church teaches concerning Protestants, and concerning final authority in things spiritual.

Papal Claims

The Roman Catholic Church makes the following claims: (a) the Pope alone is successor to the Apostles; (b) he is the Vicar of Jesus Christ; (c) he alone is the guide and director of all Christendom; (d) by his own declaration he is “the way, the truth, and the life”. He is absolute head of the Roman Church. It is interesting to note that in Italy early in 1958, for the first time in recent history, a civil court ruled a Roman Catholic bishop guilty of defamation of character

³⁷ II Thessalonians 2:8.

because he accused a couple of living in sin and concubinage since they had not been married by a Catholic priest. As a result, the late Pope Pius XII cancelled the celebration of his birthday because he considered this overruling of ecclesiastical authority an omen of difficulties that were coming for the Roman Catholic Church. In effect, his statement is a tacit admission that the Roman Church is perhaps uneasy about her power and authority in one of her greatest strongholds — Italy. We should not forget that the decision of the court was overruled by a higher court under intense Papal pressure. But the fact that in Catholic Italy such a thing happened at all is, to say the least, food for thought.

The Roman Papacy brings up almost automatically the interesting question of, “Was Peter the first Pope?” The question demands some background if a satisfactory answer is to be given. According to Catholic teaching, when the Roman popes speak, they are speaking infallibly, without error: they are speaking as God, and Roman Catholics are to obey them as God (that is, in any area proclaimed to be under the heading of “faith and morals”). I quote now from *The Bull of Pope Boniface VIII*, entitled *Unum Sanctum*, which can be found in many Catholic reference books:

“We declare, affirm, define, and pronounce it to be necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” Cardinal Manning, certainly an authority, states that this decree is “infallible, and beyond all doubt, an act *ex cathedra*.”

This is *the* teaching of the Catholic Church concerning the *authority* of the Pope. Such statements are tremendously important because they reveal the extreme dogmatism of the Roman Church. Pope Pius IX stated: “I alone, despite my unworthiness, am the successor of the Apostles, the Vicar of Jesus Christ. I alone have the mission to guide and direct the Barque of Peter. I am the way, the truth, and the life. They who are with me are with the Church; they who are not with me are out of the Church. They are out of the way, the Truth, and the life. Let men well understand this, that they be not deceived or led astray by *soidisant* Catholics who desire and teach something quite different from what the head of the Church teaches.”

This, then, is the position of the Roman Popes. “I am the way, the truth, and the life; I alone, and despite my unworthiness, am the successor of the Apostles, the Vicar of Jesus Christ.” A vicar is “a deputy, one who acts for another” — in this case for Jesus Christ. For Roman Catholics, the words of John XXIII on matters of faith and morals are as infallible as if they came from the throne room of Jehovah Himself. Failure to believe them incurs excommunication.

I will now quote some very interesting statements from the Roman Catholic Catechism, which are taught in all Catholic schools. Then we will go on to the “proofs” that the Catholic Church uses to establish that Peter was the first pope. First of all, Lesson II on the Church clearly states:

“The Church is the congregation of all those who profess the faith of Christ, and partake of the same sacraments and are governed by their lawful pastors under one visible head.” The word Church here implies the religious society founded by Jesus Christ which, of course, they maintain is the Roman Catholic Church. Listen, further, to some of the statements which they make. Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ: “He rules, governs and preserves the Church.” But how does He do it? “Through the ministry of His Apostles and their successors.” Who is the visible head of the Church? “Our Holy Father the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, is the Vicar of Christ on earth and the visible head of the Church.” Other names of the Pope: “Sovereign Pontiff, Father of Christendom, His Holiness.”

In contrast to this position, turn in the Catholic Bible to the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel and you will find a statement concerning the Person of God the Father *made* by the Lord Jesus Christ — a statement tremendously important when considering the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on the Papacy. Only once in the entire Bible and in this passage (also known as “the High Priest's prayer”) does Jesus Christ use this term. I want you to note to Whom He applies it. Christ said: “And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to Thee Holy Father, keep in Thy name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.” (John 17:11) The Scripture, then, plainly speaks of a Holy Father but the Scripture speaks of but *one* Holy Father. The Scripture speaks exclusively of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ! The Roman Catholic Church has therefore taken the very title of God Himself and has bestowed it upon sinful men. They have given to every succeeding pope the title, “Holy Father”, and yet the Scripture says there is but *one* Holy Father and out of the mouth of Jesus Christ, His Son, this title is given to God His Father. “Holy Father, keep in Thy name those whom Thou hast given me.”

This is significant, because the Lord Jesus Christ many times used language that the Roman Catholic Church has adopted. The interesting thing, however, is that Christ's usage of the terms is frequently the direct opposite of what the Catholic Church claims for them, as seen in the case of John 17:11. Sometimes, they do not even hesitate to disobey His expressed commands. For example, every priest is designated “Father”, or given the honorary title of spiritual father. John XXIII and his papal predecessors have been given the title “Holy Father” chiefly because this sets them apart or designates that they are in some way different from other men — that they have a special office. Yet it was the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Gospel of Matthew, Who made a statement most damaging to this Roman Catholic teaching. I quote from the Roman Catholic Douay version of the Bible: “And call no one on earth Father, for *one* is your Father who is in heaven. Neither be called master for *one only* is your master, the Christ. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant.” (Matthew 23:9) But this is not true of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The Catholic Church divides its people by means of an autocratic, self-perpetuating hierarchy consisting of the pope, cardinals, arch-bishops, bishops, monsignors, and priests. Under them are the laity, those who are taught by those who are allegedly above them in spiritual authority. They are, very literally, the servants of this hierarchy, not the reverse. To know this is true, you need only go to St. Patrick's Cathedral and watch a Roman Catholic bow subserviently before a cardinal or bishop and kiss his ring. You need only notice that one of the ceremonies of Roman Catholic teaching is bowing before the Pope, prostrating oneself before him, and the kissing of his toe.

It is common knowledge that Roman Catholics have an almost superstitious respect for their priesthood, particularly for the priests' hands since they allegedly handle God (the Host) at the sacrifice of the Mass, as Roman Catholic theology teaches. Roman Catholic teaching maintains that the priest, after he is ordained, (though he himself may be a terrible, openly reprobate individual), so long as he is performing the rites of the Church is, when he consecrates Mass, in reality, validly performing a divine work.

A few weeks ago, when I was riding in a subway in New York City, I sat bolt upright while looking at the various advertisements. One of the signs said: “A Prayer to God, Send us more Christs.” I blinked and looked up again in amazement. Sure enough, it read: “Send us more Christs.” On closer inspection I found it was a prayer to the Virgin Mary to send the Catholic Church more “Christs”. And these “Christs”, the poster said, were “missionaries”, “teachers”, and “priests”! Such teachings of the Catholic Church rarely get out that far into the public eye for

Protestants to fully understand, but every priest, after ordination, believes he possesses the authority of Christ. They are often referred to in foreign countries, where the Catholic Church is much more open and bold concerning certain of her teachings (Mexico, Spain, and South America), as almost divine beings who have the power and authority to not only forgive sins, but to bless and curse in God's name. You will find this in many, many Roman Catholic statements published in these countries and some even in the United States.

Relative to the Catechism statement; "Our Holy Father the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, the Vicar of Christ on earth", etc., the Scriptures teach us that the "Vicar" of Christ on earth, according to the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of the Gospel of John, is none other than the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity.

"And I will ask the Father and He Will give you another Advocate ... the Spirit of truth" ... "When He is come ... He will teach you all the truth." (John 14:16-17, 16:13-14)

Who, then, is the true Vicar of Christ on earth? It is the Holy Spirit. He it is who guides the Christians. It is not necessary for a visible head of the Church to exist even if there were a thousand denominations. As long as they were agreed on the fundamentals of the Christian Faith and were possessed of the same Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, there would be no confusion sufficient to jeopardize the effective proclamation of the grace of Christ and the faith that delivers the soul from death. Such agreement on basic issues does exist in Protestantism and "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:17)

Now, let us go a bit further into the Roman Catholic teachings concerning the Pope. The Pope is called the "Vicar of Christ" because he allegedly "represents" Christ and acts in the name and place of Christ over the whole Roman Catholic Church. Why does the Church need a visible head? The Roman Catholic Catechism states their answer:

"The Church, as a visible society, needs a visible head to preserve unity in faith, morals, and government throughout the world."

Yet it is the specific function of the Holy Spirit, as taught by Jesus Christ, to preserve exactly what the Pope is supposed to preserve: faith, morals, and government throughout the earth! There is a direct contradiction between the office of the Papacy and the office of the Holy Spirit, for it is the Holy Spirit Who is the third Person of the Godhead. It is He Who indwells the believer; it is He Who makes intercession for us; it is He Who is our friend, our companion, our "comforter", not the "Vicar of Christ" of the Roman Catholic Church. (See John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7.) It is good to bear this in mind that the Unity of the Body of Christ is not dependent upon outward organization, but upon spiritual fellowship.

We shall now progress to a very interesting section of Scripture with which every Catholic is familiar: St. Matthew 16:18. I do not know how many times I have talked to Roman Catholic people who have referred me to this passage of Scripture. They have said to me:

"You know, your church began with Calvin", or "Your church began with Knox", or "Your church began with Luther or Zwingli, (or someone else); but the Roman Catholic Church alone began with Jesus Christ." They almost always turn to this reference to "prove" their point. Even if a Catholic does not know his Bible at all, you can always be certain that this is one verse in his Bible that he knows very well. We should read the context of this passage carefully, because if we just quote verse eighteen, we miss the heart of what Jesus was saying.

Beginning with verse thirteen, we read: "Jesus having come into the district of Caesarea Philippi began to ask his disciples saying, 'Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?' But they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others Elias, and other Jeremias, or one of the prophets.'

He said to them, ‘But whom do you say that I am?’ And Simon Peter answered and said ‘Thou art The Christ, the Son of the Living God.’

“Then Jesus answered and said, ‘Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood have not revealed this unto thee, but my Father in Heaven. And I say unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ And then He strictly charged His disciples to tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.”

Now, I would like to ask a question at this point—a question that I always ask my Roman Catholic friends. I often say to them, “Let’s not get into a argument about Peter and the Rock and things of this nature. The important things we want to get into our minds is this: who is the one Person that should have understood what Jesus said better than any one, whether he be a Roman Catholic Pope, a bishop, a priest, or a Protestant theologian?” Invariably the average Catholic will say, “Peter, of course: he was the one to whom Jesus was speaking.” With this, we readily agree.

Now in this connection I would refer you to the second chapter of Peter’s first epistle. I point Catholics to this chapter rather than mere interpretations given by any Protestant theologian, which I am sure from experience they are unwilling to accept. I refer them to the supposed first Pope, for I am certain that they are willing to take what he has to say as *the* correct interpretation of what Jesus said to him in Matthew, the sixteenth chapter.

I quote from the Roman Catholic Bible: “Draw near to Him, a living stone, rejected indeed of men but chosen and honored by God. Be you yourselves as living stones, built thereon into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” Hence, the Scripture says, “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, chosen and precious, and he who believes in it shall not be put to shame!” “For you, therefore, who believe, is this honor. But to those who do not believe, A stone that the builders rejected, the same has become the *head* of the corner and a stumbling stone and a rock of offense. To those who stumble at the word and who do not believe, for this, also they are destined. You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people that you may proclaim the perfection of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

When you read Peter’s statement in context, one understands immediately what he is talking about. It is that simple. Peter here tells every Christian that he is a little “stone”, built up into a spiritual “temple”, and Jesus Christ is the cornerstone. To illustrate it, Peter quotes Isaiah, the prophet, who was speaking prophetically of the coming Messiah. If Peter really was the “cornerstone”, this question must be explained by the Catholic Church: Why didn’t Isaiah say, “Behold I lay in Rome a chief cornerstone?”

If Peter was allegedly Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Christ, and if the Church is built on him, it cannot be built in Zion, which is in heaven—the heavenly Jerusalem—it must be built *here* on the earth, and its foundation must rest at St. Peter’s Basilica! If Peter was the Rock, then Isaiah, the prophet, would have to have written, “Behold, I lay in *Rome* a chief cornerstone”, but he did not because Isaiah, the prophet, was not speaking about Peter—and Peter himself said so!

Isaiah, the prophet, was speaking about Jesus Christ, “Behold, I lay in Zion (the city of God) a chief cornerstone, chosen and precious, and he who believes in it shall not be put to shame.” (Isaiah 28:16, Douay version) The Greek here very clearly reveals that the word translated “it” can also be rendered “Him”. I prefer, instead of saying “it”, to say “Him” because you cannot

believe on an “*it*”: you can only believe on a *Person*. Here the Person is the Lord Jesus Christ as Peter points out.

The Catholic Church then must explain the phrase, “Whoever believes on *Him*, shall not be put to shame.” After all, Peter was certainly not the one who was going to be believed upon. If people believe in Peter, they *will* be put to open shame, for Peter was but a sinner saved by grace. To believe in Christ as the “cornerstone”, as Peter says He is, will not put anybody to shame. It is also significant, when you read verse nine of the Catholic version of the Bible, to notice that Peter in writing to Christians (see [I Peter 1:1–9](#) and [2:24–25](#)), (not to a pope, or to cardinals, or to bishops, or to priests), makes this amazing statement: “You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.”

Think of that, every Christian is a member of the priesthood. We are all priests before God,—“a holy nation, a purchased people”—that you, (not the clergy alone), “may proclaim the perfections of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” That is the true teaching of the Scripture, we’re all members of a new priesthood. In [Revelation 1:6](#), we are told that Christ “hath made us a Kingdom and Priests to God and His Father.” There is, then, a priesthood of *all* believers. If you are a Roman Catholic outside of Christ, and you want to know what your position will be if you accept the Lord Jesus Christ and trust Him alone for your salvation, here is the truth from Scripture.

God says you do not need a pope, a cardinal, a bishop, or a priest—God says *you* will be a priest, a member of a “holy priesthood”, and He is going to use you, as a Christian, to bring people out of darkness into His marvelous light. This is a wonderful promise from the Word of God and it only needs to be accepted and acted upon to validate its truth experientially in the Christian life.

How, then, should we understand [Matthew 16:18](#)? We could take the Greek and show how there is a *play* on words; we could give you grammatical explanations, but you would be more confused than edified, because a knowledge of Greek is essential. Therefore, I will just ask you to think about the following: Who should understand better than anybody else what Jesus said? The answer must be “Peter”. What does Peter say? Peter says, “We’re all little stones, and we are built up into a spiritual temple, made of other little stones (i.e. other believers, the Church), and Jesus Christ is the “cornerstone”. Therefore, upon Whom was the Church built? Upon Jesus Christ: “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, chosen and precious: and he that believes in Him shall not be put to shame.”

Now, let’s go one step further. What more do the Scriptures say concerning the Stone? The second chapter of Ephesians, the twentieth verse, is one of the greatest texts in the New Testament dealing with the subject of the foundation Stone of the Christian Church. Certainly, if we are to be edified, we must draw upon the source that deals most thoroughly with the problem of the Papacy and Roman Catholic teaching—we must deal with the Bible.

Again from the Roman Catholic Bible, let me quote what the Holy Spirit says concerning these things: “You are built upon the foundation of the apostles, and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him, the whole structure is closely fitted together and grows into a temple, holy in the Lord. In Him, you are being built into a dwelling place for God in the spirit.” There is no mention of Peter here; there is no mention that the Church is built upon Peter as the rock. “You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets” —Peter, it is true, is in there, but the whole structure does not rest upon Peter; it rests upon Jesus Christ, the “chief cornerstone”.

In [1 Corinthians 10:4](#), we learn, as we do over and over again in the Scripture, that Christ is considered a Rock. This verse—[1 Corinthians 10:4](#)—concerns Christ, and it uses the illustration of the wilderness travels of the Jews [—for in the wilderness the children of Israel partook of the blessing of Christ—], and it cites a specific instance which is important: “... all ate the same spiritual food, all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from the *spiritual rock* and *the rock was Christ*.” Christ then is consistently described in Scripture by the metaphorical usage — Rock. The whole foundation of Roman Catholicism admittedly rests upon Peter as *the rock*. Once you have shown that Christ is the Rock, there is no apostolic succession. There is no authority for the claim of the Roman Catholic Church and there is no basis to their claim that they are the “only true Church of Christ”.

That this claim is made by the Catholic Church, and that their dogmatism goes far beyond anything that the Protestant Church maintains, no informed person denies.

I quote the Roman Catholic Catechism on this point: “Why did Christ found the Church? Christ founded the Church to teach, govern, sanctify, and save all men. By what means does the Church sanctify and save all men? The Church sanctifies and saves all men by means of the Mass, the Sacraments, and special blessing and devotions. To save their souls, Catholics must, 1. Believe all the teachings of the Church; 2. Keep the commandments of God and the Church; 3. Pray to God and worthily receive the Sacraments.” I think this quotation is very important. Here, out of a Roman Catholic Catechism, comes vindication for Father Feeney of Boston, who was unfrocked by the Catholic Church because they said he was teaching a doctrine they did not believe, and because he would not keep silent on the subject and submit to discipline. His doctrine was this: “Unless you belong to the Roman Catholic Church, you will be lost.” In effect, he was saying, “There is no salvation outside the Roman Catholic Church.” He was excommunicated for refusing to keep silent on this point, though Rome has never denied her official teaching on the subject—which teaching, incidentally, Feeney was propagating.

Pope Pius XII never fully answered Fenney’s special plea, based on sound authority, because to answer his plea would be to admit what the Roman Church has always taught.

Once again I quote the Roman Catholic Catechism: “Are all people bound to belong to the Catholic Church? All are bound to belong to the Church, and he who knows the Church to be the true church and remains out of it, cannot be saved. Why are all bound to belong to the Church? All are bound to belong to the Church because Christ founded it for all nations and for all times, and it alone possesses the *means* that is necessary for salvation. What is the meaning of the saying, ‘Outside the Church there is no salvation’? This means that whoever, through his own fault, willfully remains outside the True Church will not be saved.”

I repeat it for emphasis: “This means that whoever, through his own fault, willfully remains outside the True Church, will not be saved.” The Jesuits have a doctrine called, “Invincible Ignorance”. If you are so invincibly ignorant that you cannot understand that the Catholic Church is the True Church, God will somehow pardon you and accept you, *if* you do not oppose the Catholic Church. That doctrine dooms all Protestant Christians according to Roman Catholic theology, because according to our belief as taught in the Scripture, we “willfully— through our own fault” remain outside the Roman Catholic Church.

The true position of the Roman Church is very clear. This is taught in their parochial schools and is a very well known fact in ecclesiastical circles. The average Catholic may not be aware of it, but this is the teaching of his Church; this is what he is taught in his high school, and this is what he must, when pressed, believe. The late Bishop Ronald Knox of England, as quoted by

Time Magazine, put it even more bluntly when he stated, “All the identification discs in Heaven will be Roman Catholics.”

Further evidence as to the Roman Church’s true position is shown in this quotation from “The American Ecclesiastical Reviews”: “No one can have a real objective right to practice any but the true religion, and Catholics believe that Catholicism *is the only true religion* which God commands all men to accept. Every other religion is false and opposed to God’s plan for man’s salvation...” (January, 1946, pages 35–37)

History And Papal Tradition

In view of Rome’s assertions previously quoted, and her insistence on historical vindication, it might be profitable to examine some instances that do not favor her claim to either unbroken Apostolic succession or papal infallibility. Gregory I was the first pope of any great renown or of whom we have a reliable historical record. He lived about the year 590 A.D. Gregory I, or Gregory the Great, was once faced with a dispute concerning Communion. In this dispute he made some pertinent statements. I quote Gregory’s “ex cathedra” pronouncement concerning Communion because it is just the opposite of the “ex cathedra” statement by the Roman Catholic Church today. Gregory said: “Cursed be anyone that does not receive both bread and wine and teaches others not to take both bread and wine.”

According to another equally infallible Pope and the Council of Trent: “Cursed be anyone who teaches that we must receive both bread and wine.” Here are two papal injunctions, both of which allegedly come from God, in which Catholics are cursed both coming and going. If they take the bread and the wine, they are cursed by the pronouncement of the Church today. If they do not receive both, they are cursed by the Church yesterday. Any way you look at it—if they take bread and wine, or if they do not take bread and wine—they are still cursed by a pope and, strangely enough, they are speaking on matters of “faith and morals” and are, therefore, allegedly infallible!

There are quite a few other statements made by popes that make fascinating reading, but I think the most fascinating is the fact that a number of the popes in Roman Catholic history took it upon themselves to argue with one another to the point that, at one time (1378–1417), there were *three* lines of Papal claimants all claiming to be the successor to St. Peter; all of them trying to occupy the chair of Rome; all of them fighting and plotting against one another to get there. These three Popes, Gregory XII, Clement VII, and Alexander VII, all gave way to Martin V in 1417, but in the interim the “faithful” followed all three. Their conflicting pronouncements and “divine” decrees notwithstanding, yet Rome still claims the true succession from Peter has never been broken.

It is also an historical fact that the infamous Borgia family, the most notorious poisoners in the history of the world, had as their father Alexander VI, Pope of Rome. Alexander obtained the chair of Peter by simony, lived an immoral life and practiced simony and immorality, even after he ascended the papacy*. With his son, Caesar, he tried to unify Italy under the Borgia crest. These are some of the examples in the development of the Papacy. Yet the Roman Church says that Alexander VI, even in his wickedness and in his assent to the murder of other people, was still the Vicar of Christ on earth; and that in matters of “faith and morals” he could do no wrong. Other highlights in papal intrigue include the false reigns of Popes Christophorus, Sergius III,

* Ludwig, Pastor, *History of the Popes*, (Vol. 5, pages 363, 385; Vol. 6, page 140)

John X, and John XI from 903–936 A.D.—all of whom disgraced their office—and considerable evidence has been adduced from reputable sources to the effect that Pope John VIII was a woman!

We could look into other aspects of the Papacy. But the important thing is that the Word of God teaches us that the Papacy does not rest upon Scriptures, it rests upon tradition; it rests upon the teachings of a group of people who, through the ages, have built an entire organization upon little more than the premise that they have a divine right to rule.

In the midst of discussion with Roman Catholics over the historicity of Papal tradition, a very significant often neglected fact should be brought to bear. This is the fact that until 1870 the papacy was *not* considered infallible and was only rendered so after much protest from noted Catholic leaders had been silenced by papal pressure. One such noted leader was Bishop Joseph George Strossmayer, who joined twenty-one Archbishops and sixty-four Bishops in voting *against* the elevating of Pope Pius IX to the position of an infallible interpreter of truth for Catholics. At the famous eighty-fifth General Congregation of the Vatican Council, July 13, 1870, Bishop Strossmayer delivered a vigorous defense of his position, extracts of which we shall quote as a brilliant summarization and critique of the massive folly of papal infallibility.

“Well, venerable brethren, here history raises its voice to assure us that some popes have erred. You may protest against it or deny it, as you please, but I will prove it. Pope Victor (192) first approved of Montanism, and then condemned it. Marcellinus (296–303) was an idolater. He entered into the temple of Vesta, and offered incense to the goddess. You will say that it was an act of weakness; but I answer, a vicar of Jesus Christ dies rather than become an apostate. Liberius (358) consented to the condemnation of Athanasius, and made a profession of Arianism, that he might be recalled from his exile and reinstated in his See. Honorius (625) adhered to Monothelism: Farther Gratry has proved it to demonstration. Gregory I (785–90) calls any one Antichrist who takes the name of Universal Bishop, and contrariwise Boniface III (607–9) made the patricide Emperor Phocas confer that title upon him. Paschall II (1088–99) and Eugenius III (1145–53) authorized dueling; Julius II (1509) and Pius IV (1560) forbade it. Eugenius IV (1432–39) approved the Council of Basle and the restitution of the chalice to the church of Bohemia; Pius II (1458) revoked the concession. Hadrian II (867–872) declared civil marriages to be valid; Pius VII (1800–23) condemned them. Sixtus V (1585–90) published an edition of the Bible, and by a Bull recommended it to be read; Pius VII condemned the reading of it. Clement XIV (1769–1774) abolished the order of the Jesuits, permitted by Paul III and Pius VII re-established it. Pope Vigilius (538) purchased the papacy from Belisarius, lieutenant of the Emperor Justinian. Pope Eugenius III (IV in original) (1145) imitated Vigilius. St. Bernard, the bright star of his age, reproves the pope, saying to him: “Can you show me in this great city of Rome any one who would receive you as pope if they had not received gold or silver for it?”

“You know the history of Formosus too well for me to add to it. Stephen XI caused his body to be exhumed, dressed in his pontifical robes; he made the fingers which he used for giving the benediction to be cut off, and then had him thrown into the Tiber, declaring him to be a perjurer and illegitimate. He was then imprisoned by the people, poisoned, and strangled. Look how matters were readjusted; Romanus, successor to Stephen, and after him, [John 10](#), rehabilitated the memory of Formosus.

“But you will tell me these are fables, not history. Fables! Go, Monsignori, to the Vatican Library and read Platina, the historian of the papacy and the annuals of Baronius (A.D. 897). These are facts, which, for the honor of the Holy See, we would wish to ignore.

“I go on. The learned Cardinal Baronius, speaking of the papal court, says (give attention, my venerable brethren to these words), ‘What did the Roman church appear in those days? How infamous! Only all-powerful courtesans governing in Rome! It was they who gave, exchanged and took bishoprics; and horrible to relate, they got their lovers, the false popes, put on the throne of St. Peter.’ (Baronius A.D. 912)

“Look now. The greatest number of these antipopes appear in the genealogical tree of the papacy. And it must have been this absurdity that Baronius described; because Generbardo, the great flatterer of the popes, had dared to say in his Chronicles (A.D. 901): “This century is unfortunate, as for nearly 150 years the popes have fallen from all the virtues of their predecessors, and have become apostates rather than apostles.”

“I can understand how the illustrious Baronius must have blushed when he narrated the acts of these Roman popes. Speaking of John XI (931), natural son of Pope Sergius and of Marozia, he wrote these words in his annals—‘The holy church, that is, the Roman, has been vilely trampled on by such a monster.’ John XII (956), elected pope at the age of eighteen, through the influence of courtesans, was not one whit better than his predecessor.

“I grieve, my venerable brethren, to stir up so much filth, I am silent on Alexander VI, father and lover of Lucretia; I turn away from John XXIII (1410), who, because of simony and immorality, was deposed by the holy Ecumenical Council of Constance.

“I do not speak of the schisms which have dishonored the church. In those unfortunate days the See of Rome was occupied by two competitors, and sometimes even by three. Which of these is the true pope? ... Could you do it (decree the infallibility) and maintain that avaricious, incestuous, murdering, simoniacal popes have been vicars of Jesus Christ? Oh, venerable brethren! To maintain such an enormity would be to betray Christ worse than Judas... Let us turn to the teaching of the Apostles, since without that we have only errors, darkness, and false traditions. ... What must I do to be saved? When we have decided that, we shall have laid the foundation of our dogmatic system firm and immovable on the rock, lasting and incorruptible, of the divinely inspired Scriptures ... (do not) let them make Pius IX a god, as we have made a goddess of the Blessed Virgin. Stop, stop, venerable brethren, on the odious and ridiculous incline on which you have placed yourselves. Save the church from the shipwreck that threatens her, asking for the Holy Scriptures alone for the rule of Faith which we ought to believe and to profess. I have spoken; may God help me!”

To what Bishop Strossmayer said, all Protestants can heartily agree. The papacy as a system then is built upon false premises. However, the pity is that power politics silenced him and his worthy supporters. The teaching of the Scriptures is that Jesus Christ is the “chief cornerstone”. “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ Jesus.” (1 Cor. 3:11)

To study the Papacy is to learn a valuable lesson— to learn that when we surrender to men what we are commanded to surrender only to the Holy Spirit, spiritual tyranny and slavery of the human mind and the souls of men can come about.

With Thomas Jefferson, we in America today, might well say: “We have sworn, on the altar of Jehovah, eternal hostility against all forms of tyranny over the minds of men.” “I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ... You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone ... and the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner ... whosoever believes in Him shall not be ashamed.” (Ephesians 2:20, 1 Peter 2:6–7)

This is a chapter from, The Roman Catholic Church in History, by Walter R. Martin, (CRI, Livingston, NJ: 1960)

The Alignment of New Evangelicals with Apostasy

By Richard M. Bennett

Evangelicals throughout the centuries have maintained that justification by faith alone is the way in which sinful human beings are in Christ made right before the all Holy God.¹ Justification itself is a judicial declarative act on the part of God alone by which He declares that only in Christ is a man perfectly just. His judicial declarative act is not made on the basis of anything within a man, but rather it is made solely and wholly upon the righteous life and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ who lived a perfect life and paid the just penalty for sins upon the cross. Historically, Evangelicals have been in agreement with the Apostle Paul, “*to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*”²

A person calling himself Evangelical is professing to be committed to the Gospel of Christ as proclaimed in Scripture. The true Gospel demands separation from all who teach another Gospel, as the Apostle declared, “*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*”³ Without such separation the name Evangelical signifies nothing. New Evangelicalism, which willingly compromises with, and accommodates another gospel, has gained ground everywhere since about 1960. Since then the Evangelical world has changed beyond recognition. This is fully documented in *Evangelicalism Divided* by Iain Murray (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000). The first and second National Evangelical Anglican Conferences that met at Keele and Nottingham in the UK in 1967 and 1977 respectively showed a willingness to be united with ritualistic Anglicans, essentially Roman Catholic in belief and practice, and liberals who believed in a fallible Bible. Leading evangelicals, such as J.I. Packer and John Stott, endorsed the statements from these conferences and, in so doing; set aside Gospel truth in favor of accepting fellow Anglicans as true brothers and sisters in Christ. The most drastic departure however from the Biblical Gospel took place some seventeen years after the Nottingham Conference in 1994 in the USA. At the end of March 1994, a group of twenty leading Evangelicals and twenty leading Roman Catholics produced a document entitled *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium* (ECT).

Two of the main instigators of this intense ecumenical thrust were Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, a Lutheran pastor turned Roman Catholic priest. The specific task was begun in September 1992. These men were joined in the writing process by Larry Lewis of the

¹ The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646; The Baptist Confession of Faith, 1689; The Philadelphia Confession of Faith, Adopted by The Baptist Association, 1742; and others.

² Romans 4:5.

³ Galatians 1:8–9.

Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Jesse Miranda of Assemblies of God, John White of the Geneva College and National Association of Evangelicals, and others, including two Jesuits, Avery Dulles and Juan Diaz-Vilar. Two more Jesuits had signed the declaration by the time of its presentation. In addition to the Evangelical participants who helped form the document, signers included J. I. Packer, Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, Mark Noll of Wheaton College, and Pat Robertson of the 700 Club. Roman Catholic signers included such well know figures as Cardinal John O’Connor, now deceased, Archbishop Sevilla, Archbishop Stafford, and Bishop Francis George, now Archbishop of Chicago.

The Gospel According to ECT

The signers of ECT readily admit of “differences that cannot be resolved here”. However motivated by the desire for union on important moral issues, the authors of ECT proclaim that Evangelicals and Catholics are one in Christ, and that all are truly Christians. The primary fallacy of the lengthy document is its declaration on the Gospel. The signers state what they believe comes closest to Gospel of Christ when they declare,

“We affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ. Living faith is active in love that is nothing less than the love of Christ...” (p. 5)

To be Biblical, this statement should read, “We affirm together that we are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.” The word “alone” signifies that the perfect righteousness of Christ Jesus and that alone is sufficient before the Holy God to justify unholy sinners.⁴ To so define justification, however, would exclude the Catholic sacraments and the priests who control them, both of which are necessary for the Catholic.⁵ Thus a subtraction had to be made from the Gospel of Christ in excluding what is signified by the word alone. In a similar manner an addition had to made to the gospel in ECT words that qualify faith as, “living faith active in love”. This was to accommodate the inclusion of the Catholic sacraments. This was exactly the same intent of the Council of Trent in its qualification of the meaning of faith. Trent declared,

*“For faith, unless hope and charity be added to it, neither unites one perfectly with Christ, nor makes him a living member of his body.... This faith, in accordance with apostolic tradition, catechumens beg of the Church before the sacrament of baptism...”*⁶

The theology of the Church of Rome always comes back to the concept of “living faith” so as to include works, particularly her sacraments that she defines as necessary for salvation.⁷

⁴ Romans 4:5–8, II Corinthians 5:19–21, Romans 3:22–28, Titus 3:5–7, Ephesians 1:7, Jeremiah 23:6, I Corinthians 1:30–31, Romans 5:17–19.

⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church (Liguori Publications, 1994) Para. # 987. Hereafter referred to as Catechism.

⁶ Council of Trent, Sess. 6, Chap. 7:

⁷ Catechism , Para 1129.

The New Evangelical signers of ECT have concurred with the Roman Catholic definition of “living faith active in love”, and thus they have formally agreed to an addition to the Gospel that nullifies its message.

Rome continues to show her understanding of “living faith” in the 1994 *Catechism* when she declares, “the very root of the Church’s living faith [is] principally by means of Baptism.”⁸ If the New Evangelicals do in fact believe the Roman Catholic concept of “living faith,” they ought logically to endorse Rome’s curse upon all who have simple faith in God’s grace, as was officially done by Rome at the Council of Trent,

“If anyone shall say that by faith alone the sinner is justified, so as to understand that nothing else is required to cooperate in the attainment of the grace of justification, and that it is in no way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will: let him be anathema [cursed].”⁹

To endorse Roman Catholic teaching, therefore, is to deny the clear teaching of Scripture, “*But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.*”¹⁰

Evangelicals Also Endorse Baptismal Regeneration

In the general heading of “We Witness Together,” and (to use the document’s language) “in the context of evangelization and ‘reevangelization,” the New Evangelicals go so far as to recognize that “for Catholics, all who are validly baptized are born again and are truly, however imperfectly, in communion with Christ.” (p. 23). These New Evangelicals might as well have quoted the Roman Catholic Code of Canon Law that says the same thing,

“Baptism...by which men and women are freed from their sins, are reborn as children of God and, configured to Christ...”¹¹

In contrast to the teaching of Rome and the signed statements of J. I. Packer, Chuck Colson, et al., the words of the risen Christ in giving the Gospel are crystal clear. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned.”¹² Faith is the key of saving grace, and unbelief is the chief damning sin. Faith is what is absolutely necessary to salvation, baptism is an ordinance that follows faith and simply testifies to it. Proof of this is found in the fact of the omission in the second half of the verse: it is not “he that is not baptized shall be damned,” but rather “he that believeth not.” The repentance from this endorsement of the doctrine of Baptismal regeneration, and of an incomplete Gospel, by both subtraction and addition, requested over the years and formally called for at the 1999 Ex Catholics For Christ Conference has not come. Rather a defense of the document has been maintained both in the USA and overseas.

⁸ Catechism, Para. 249.

⁹ Denzinger, #819.

¹⁰ Titus 3:4–5.

¹¹ Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Ed. (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983) Can. 849

¹² Mark 16:16.

The Devastating Effect of ECT

The real effect of the New Evangelical compromise with the Gospel is to put a stop to the evangelization of Roman Catholics across the world. If this compromise of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ is accepted, then Bible believing churches will refrain from evangelizing Catholics. The im-pact on the true church in third world Catholic countries in Central and South America, in Africa, as well as in Spain, Portugal, and the Philippines, is already apparent. If this anti-Evangelical trend continues unchecked it will become ruinous to the spiritual welfare of millions of souls. But this is exactly the policy the ECT signers promulgate when they state,

“We are aware that our experience reflects the distinctive circumstances and opportunities of Evangelicals and Catholics living together in North America. At the same time, we believe that what we have discovered and resolved is pertinent to the relationship between Evangelicals and Catholics in other parts of the world.”

and

“...it is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community [church] to proselytize [evangelize] among active adherents of another Christian community.” Introduction p.1

Since when has it been theologically illegitimate to expose error and heresy? Because these intelligent and educated men have contradicted the very Gospel of Christ, it is time to state that the biblical mandate of separation from such men must be observed! *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”*¹³

Compounded Endorsement of Rome

On November 12, 1997, a document entitled “The Gift of Salvation” was signed and published by Evangelical and Roman Catholic leaders. Its expressed intention was to demonstrate the “common faith” of Evangelicals and Roman Catholics, and to further “acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.” It was published in the December 8, 1997, issue of *Christianity Today*. Explicitly, the Roman Catholic (RC) signatories such as Richard John Neuhaus and Avery Dulles, S.J., state in the document that they are “Catholics who are conscientiously faithful to the teaching of the Catholic Church.” What might be expected then is in fact discovered in the document. The Roman Catholic doctrine of conferred justification is taught as the Gospel. J.I. Packer, Charles Colson, Os Guinness, Richard Land, Bill Bright are now joined together with Timothy George, T.M. Moore, John Woodbridge, and others in not only giving a clouded Gospel-Justification message, but also in a distinctively erudite manner, endorsing Rome’s doctrine of conferred inner righteousness.

A Studied Denial of the Gospel

¹³ II John 1:9–11

The document states, “Justification is central to the scriptural account of salvation, and its meaning has been much debated between Protestants and Catholics.” Then it claims that the signers have reached an agreement. Their statement of accord is,

We agree that justification is not earned by any good works or merits of our own; it is entirely God’s gift, conferred through the Father’s sheer graciousness, out of the love that he bears us in his Son, who suffered on our behalf and rose from the dead for our justification. Jesus was “put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25). In justification, God, on the basis of Christ’s righteousness alone, declares us to be no longer his rebellious enemies but his forgiven friends, and by virtue of his declaration it is so.

The subject under review is stated clearly in the first sentence. “We agree that justification...is conferred through the Father’s sheer graciousness.” Then by careful reading one comes to see that what the two pivotal sentences state grammatically,

“...it [justification] is entirely God’s gift, conferred [rather than imputed]...and by virtue of his [God’s] declaration it [justification conferred] is so.”

This is traditional Roman Catholic doctrine. To employ the Roman Catholic word “conferred” instead of the Biblical word “imputed” is tantamount to putting aside Scriptural authority on the issue of justification. Since medieval times, the RCC has clearly distinguished between the concept of imputation and the concept of God’s grace conferred as a quality of the soul.¹⁴ Since the Council of Trent she has condemned the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone. Present day dogma of the RCC not only upholds the teaching of the Council of Trent but also declares that such Councils are infallible.¹⁵ Council of Trent proclaims the following curse:

*If anyone shall say that by the said sacraments of the New Law, grace is not **conferred** from the work which has been worked [ex opere operato] **but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices to obtain grace: let him be anathema.***¹⁶

*Rome’s reason for such a curse on those who hold to “justification by faith alone” and to “justification imputed” is logical because of what she refuses to concede. For her, justification is not an immediate one-time act of God, received by faith alone; rather, she teaches that grace is conferred continually through her sacraments. Thus she is able to make a place for herself as a necessary means through which inner righteousness is given. She teaches in her 1994 Catechism, “**Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith.** It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy.”*¹⁷

Because inner righteousness, which is claimed to have been conferred, is located in the person, and not located in Christ, it can be lost and may need to be conferred again and again. Thus Rome officially states,

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica , 2 vols., Great Books of the Western World Series , Tr. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952) Part I of the Second Part, Question 110, Article 1, Obj. 3 and Article 2, Reply Obj. 1.

¹⁵ Catechism , Para. 891.

¹⁶ Denzinger, #851, Canon 8.

¹⁷ Catechism , Para. 1992.

“...the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as ‘the second plank (of salvation) after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace.’”¹⁸

Conferred justification” is necessary for Rome because of her claim that the work of her sacraments is the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus she states,

‘Sacramental grace’ is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament.”¹⁹

Calling “sacramental grace” the “the grace of the Holy Spirit” is pretentious blasphemy against the All Holy God. What is declared in Scripture is the imputation of God’s righteousness in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the words of the Apostle “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”²⁰ The Roman Catholic Church’s persistence in using the word “conferred” is an attempt to exchange her sacraments for Jesus Christ, the Lord and giver of life.

In the face of such clarity, both on the part of Scripture and on the part of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), this new Evangelical distortion claims that both sides now agree on what has been the issue of division between Protestants and Roman Catholics for several hundred years. This it does precisely by using Roman Catholic terminology: The perversion by which the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone is set aside in this document is by the use of the RCC term, “conferred.” Through this accommodation, the Biblical teaching of the righteousness of God imputed to the believer is subsumed under Rome’s traditional concept of inner or infused righteousness. Evangelicals such as J.I. Packer, Timothy George, and Os Guinness, known for their writings on the subject of the Gospel, are accustomed to the Biblical word, “imputed”. For them to agree to the Roman Catholic word “conferred”, in place of the Biblical term “imputed”, is a major betrayal. The Apostle Paul uses the concept of imputation (crediting, reckoning or counting) eleven times in Romans chapter four, a summary of which is verse five, “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Now this pivotal truth of God’s righteousness in the Lord Jesus Christ imputed to the believer is undermined in the document’s most horrifying concept,

“...and by virtue of his [Holy God’s] declaration it [justification conferred] is so.”

With like subtlety, so Rome has always taught, from the Council of Trent to the present day. Now the New Evangelicals join them. This is pious professional fraud. What response can one make to these new Evangelicals personalities teaching the conferred righteousness of Rome? Can one do other than separate from such men in the words of the Apostle “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”²¹

The Defense of “Evangelicals and Catholics Together.”

¹⁸ Catechism, Para. 1446.

¹⁹ Catechism, Para 1129.

²⁰ [Philippians 3:9](#)

²¹ [Ephesians 5:11](#).

The most serious apologetic for the document entitled “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium” (ECT) is in the book of the same title *Evangelicals & Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission*.²² The architects of ECT were well aware of the crucial distinctions with regards to the Gospel separating Catholics and Evangelicals, but they chose to by-pass them. Packer writes in *Common Mission*, “Neither evangelicals nor Roman Catholics can stipulate that things they believe, which the other side does not believe, be made foundational to partnership at this point; so ECT lets go Protestant precision on the doctrine of justification and the correlation between conversion and new birth...”²³ That such compromise is heretical is seen from his statements earlier in the same article in *Common Mission*, when he said, “...Roman teaching obscures the gospel and indeed distorts it in a tragically anti-spiritual and unpastoral manner...”²⁴ and “Rome’s official doctrinal disorders, particularly on justification, merit, and the Mass-sacrifice, so obscure the gospel that were I, as a gesture of unity, invited to mass which of course as a Protestant I am not, nor shall be I would not feel free to accept the invitation.”²⁵ Packer towards the end of the article speaks of the evils of “humanism”, “materialism, hedonism and nihilism”. To rebuild a Christian consensus he proposes that, “...**domestic differences about salvation** and the Church should not hinder us from joint action in seeking to re-Christianize the North American milieu...”²⁶ But the orthodox Evangelical Packer of old spoke of the doctrine of justification by faith alone in this way, “like Atlas, it bears a world on its shoulders, the entire evangelical knowledge of saving grace”! Now, the same saving faith is downgraded to the “domestic differences about salvation.” The warning of the Apostle Paul must sound again **now**, “*but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*”²⁷

Most Serious and Bizarre Defense

J. I. Packer, who leads the New Evangelicals, has taken an unusual explanation for his position. He has given it in different articles. One example of his strange defense is in a 1996 article, in which he states,

“Can conservative Protestants, Eastern Orthodox, and Roman Catholics of mainstream type join together in bearing witness to all that I have spoken of? I urge that we can, despite our known and continuing differences about the specifics of the salvation process and the place of the church in that process... To be sure, fundamentalists within our three traditions are unlikely to join us in this, for it is the way of fundamentalists to follow the path of contentious orthodoxy, as if the mercy of God in Christ automatically rests on persons who are notionally correct and is just as automatically withheld from those who fall short of notional correctness on any point of substance. But this concept of, in effect,

²² *Evangelicals & Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission* Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, editors. (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1995). Hereafter referred to as *Common Mission* .

²³ *Common Mission* , p 167.

²⁴ *Common Mission* , p. 153.

²⁵ *Common Mission* , pp 162,163.

²⁶ *Common Mission* , p. 172.

²⁷ [Galatians 1:7–8](#).

justification, not of works, but of words words, that is, of notional soundness and precision is near to being a cultic heresy in its own right and need not detain us further now, however much we may regret the fact that some in all our traditions are bogged down in it."²⁸

No orthodox Evangelical has ever maintained that "notional soundness and precision", that is, doctrinal theory, ever saved anyone. Rather, orthodox Evangelicals have always held to [Romans 10:10](#), "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." It appears that Packer is conducting a little casuistry of his own here. It is an ego defense attempting to preempt his critics by raising an anti-biblical dichotomy between head (religion) and heart (religion). This is an old liberal tactic, i.e., to create an unbiblical dichotomy and then infer and insinuate that any party who refuses to acknowledge it, must in the nature of the case, be unspiritual, opposed to Christian love. None of the historic Evangelical confessions of faith hold out that mere doctrinal "soundness" saves anyone. This is an absurd caricature that Packer has invented. Rather orthodox Evangelicals today, even as they did in the days of the Apostle Paul and at the Reformation, declare that it is the righteousness of Christ Jesus alone that saves a person!

What Packer does in setting aside every point of faith alone, in Christ Jesus alone, is what the Church of Rome continually does. This is the exact point that the Apostle Paul contended for against the Judaizers and the Reformers against the Roman Catholics of their day. This is the exact point on which thousands of Evangelicals gave their lives - John Huss, William Tyndale, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, John Rogers, Anne Askew, John Bradford, and John Philpot, to name a few. Now Packer creates the concept of notional correctness and of a charged "justification by words." The ardent desire of true Evangelicals to "*be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,*"²⁹ was and is the heart of the Gospel, not "contentious orthodoxy" nor "cultic heresy". What Packer has done is to deny the importance of the Scriptures on the precise point of *Sola Fide*. He also denies the Reformation history of those Evangelicals who under the Roman Catholic Inquisition gave their lives, not for any correctness in words, but rather for their faith in Christ Jesus alone. Since the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is involved and these Reformation martyrs loved not their lives unto the death for faith in Him alone, we think this matter is so serious as to demand the judgment of the Lord Himself. "*For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*"³⁰

"Separation For the Sake of the Gospel is Not Necessary"

In his essay in *Common Mission*, Roman Catholic Neuhaus stated emphatically, "*If, at the end of the twentieth century, separation for the sake of the gospel is not necessary, it is not*

²⁸ J. I. Packer, "On from Orr", The J. I. Packer Collection , Selected and Introduced by Alister McGrath (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999) p. 264.

²⁹ [Philippians 3:9](#)

³⁰ [Hebrews 10:30-31](#)

justified.”³¹ What Neuhaus declared is that the Gospel is no longer relevant to Christian unity. This seems to be the precise intent of the 1994 ECT document and equally the 1997 “The Gift of Salvation” document. If Evangelicals who would be true to the Gospel do not combat the challenging defenses of ECT I and ECT II made by New Evangelicals and their Roman Catholic counterparts, then Neuhaus’ anti-Scriptural words “separation for the sake of the gospel is not necessary” might well fall on them and their children after them. If the lie is swallowed that separation for the sake of the Gospel is not justified, then the logical conclusion is that churches should cave in and submit to the Church of Rome. This has always been the avowed goal of Rome, as her documents verify,

“...little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesial communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist [the Mass] into that unity of the one and only Church.... This unity, we believe, dwells in *the Catholic Church as something we can never lose.*”³²

Neuhaus conclusion is similar to Packer’s and still the more frightening since it comes from the Roman Catholic side, known to have legal teeth in what it decides among nations.³³ Neuhaus states, “But to declare it [justification by faith alone] to be the article by which the Church stands or falls in a manner that excludes other ways of saying the gospel is to turn it into a sectarian doctrine.”³⁴ The true Gospel of grace has in this statement not simply been declared unnecessary, but it has been labeled a “sectarian doctrine”. What has already happened and been reported in Europe might one day be the news in the USA.

“*The Belgian Chamber of Representatives recently passed a law creating a ‘sect oversight organization’ which will ‘scrutinize’ the 189 religious organizations listed in the Belgian Parliamentary Sect Report published in April 1997 ... Minority evangelical, Pentecostal and Adventist churches not belonging to the United Protestant Church of Belgium, which is recognized by the state, are targeted in the Belgian Sect Report...*”³⁵

C. H. Spurgeon’s timely words apply now even more than in his own day:

“*Since he was cursed who rebuilt Jericho, much more the man who labors to restore Popery among us. In our fathers’ days the gigantic walls of Popery fell by the power of their faith, the perseverance of their efforts, and the blast of their gospel trumpets...*”³⁶

The Gospel trumpet is the very issue at stake for the Roman Catholic and Evangelical signers of ECT I & II first give the false message of Rome, go on to uphold baptismal regeneration and then in defense of what they have written, declare that the Gospel of Christ is a “domestic matter” or even “a sectarian doctrine”. The Apostle Paul before he concluded his letter to the

³¹ Richard John Neuhaus, "The Catholic Difference", Common Mission , p. 199. Italic is in the original document.

³² Vatican Council II Documents No. 42, "Reflections and Suggestions Concerning Ecumenical Dialogue", S.P.U.C., 15 August 1975, p. 541.

³³ See our article "Vatican Prepares to Control Through Civil Law", The Beacon , No. 6, June, 2001.

³⁴ Common Mission, p. 207.

³⁵ "Growing religious intolerance in Belgium", Evangelical Times , August 1998.

³⁶ Morning and Evening , on [Joshua 6:26](#)

Romans inserted a final warning against false teachers who cause divisions by perverting doctrine of the Gospel he had delivered. His words were, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*”³⁷ This is the same as his command in [Titus 3:10–11](#) “*A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*” How serious is the Word of the Lord to true believers in this commandment? How serious is the truth of the Gospel of Christ?

Breaking point in history

We have reached a watershed moment in history. Those who truly adhere to the Gospel of Christ must hold that the Gospel not only is the power of God unto salvation, but that, as such, it cannot be contaminated with any other gospel ([Galatians 1:8–9](#)). Therefore, those who truly are ambassadors of the Gospel of Christ must separate themselves, not only from Roman Catholicism and her sacramental claims, but also must separate themselves from so-called Evangelicals who have proposed this declaration of Evangelical and Catholic unity, or have been party to it. In the Scriptures we are warned continually to separate from brothers who are in error.

We are considering men of our own day, some of whom have done outstanding work for the sake of the Gospel in the past. But now that these men consistently are acting as false teachers, they must be judged according as the Scripture directs us. Separation must take place. “*Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*”³⁸ *In the implementation of ECT I and II, J. I. Packer and Charles Colson, together with Timothy George, have been the prime movers. It is necessary now to apply Biblical principles to these men and to those who support them. Since the Gospel of Christ has been denied in these two documents, it is therefore necessary that they be treated as brothers who are in grievous error.*

*In our temporal world, infectious diseases are quarantined and contaminated food is discarded, but the danger involved here is not only temporal. Ought not brothers who would deceive the saints of God and draw them away into an ecumenism that is contrary to the Gospel of Christ be separated from the saints of the Lord for their eternal safety? God’s presence demands holiness, separation from evil. Fellowship with evil shuts out God’s gracious favor. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.”*³⁹

False Teachers Then and Now

The testimony of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures expressly forewarns God’s people of principal teachers becoming false teachers, or grievous wolves. So it was in the early days of the Church and right through history. The Church of Rome has been the main apostate system throughout the centuries because above Scripture she has embodied “the wise and learned” and because it has been the religion of kings and rulers. In history, as in our own day, she attracts scholars and philosophers, writers and businessmen. She has a form of godliness, notwithstanding errors, impieties, superstitions, and idolatries. And she has engaged well-known

³⁷ [Romans 16:17](#).

³⁸ [Jeremiah 23:29](#).

³⁹ [II Corinthians 6:17](#).

teachers and pastors to lend the weight of their fleshly credit to her soul-destroying errors. Even so, the Lord warned of false prophets in sheep's clothing that are really ravaging wolves.⁴⁰ Leaving off sound doctrine is so serious that we are told, "*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.*"⁴¹ The infallible Spirit of God testifies to the danger of apostasy. The Apostle Paul cautioned the elders of the church of Ephesus about "*grievous wolves...not sparing the flock.*"⁴² The same warning is given by the Apostle Peter calling those who would bring in damnable heresies, "false teachers".⁴³

There are a number of unequivocal warnings in the New Testament from the Lord Jesus Christ, and His Apostles, that a serious decline from the revealed truths of the Gospel would occur even among professed disciples. It cannot be held that these warnings were only for the first days of the Christian faith! They are directly pertinent to all believers living through New Covenant times. In the present-day religious climate, it is politically incorrect to say that any man has fallen into error and is acting the part of a false teacher or prophet. It is as though even these clear warnings were only for a certain period of early church history and not for us.

It is for us, however, to fear the All Holy God and obey his commandment to "*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*"⁴⁴, and to "*stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel*"⁴⁵ *J. I. Packer, like a modern Pied Piper, is leading many thousands of Evangelicals astray. Charles Colson, Bill Bright, Mark Noll, Pat Robertson, Os Guinness, Timothy George, and T.M. Moore, to mention just a few of the more prominent New Evangelicals, have publicly denied the Gospel in endorsing the anti-Biblical terms and erroneous doctrinal concepts of the Church of Rome. All together, they are falsely identifying Catholics as "our brothers and sisters in Christ", thereby reinforcing the tragic and catastrophic delusions of these poor souls and denying them the substance of saving truth! Unless there is some public repentance, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ must not only separate from these men, but also go on to pray that the Lord would vindicate His Truth!*

*Since it is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and His glorious Gospel that is at stake here, we are commanded in the words of the Apostle to "stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."*⁴⁶ *May the God of all grace who "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"*⁴⁷ regarding even this present perversion of the Gospel, bring forth a clarity of the Gospel in which His name will be glorified and souls will be saved.

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⁴⁰ Matthew 7:15.

⁴¹ I Timothy 4:1-2.

⁴² Acts 20:29.

⁴³ 2 Peter 2:1.

⁴⁴ Jude 1:3.

⁴⁵ Philippians 1:27.

⁴⁶ 1 Corinthians 16:13.

⁴⁷ Ephesians 1:11.

Scripture or Tradition?

A Review of One Key Issue Found in Catholic Documents

Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] (Mission Hills, Ca.: Benziger Pub. Co., 1994, 803 pp.)

David M. Thomas & Mary Joyce Calnan, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church: Familystyle* (Allen, Tx: Thomas More Pub., 1994, 4 Vols., 475 pp.)

by Jon Zens

The Roman Catholic Church teaches and practices many things that are clearly not found in God's Word. One could ask, "How can such a prominent religious institution promote so many false doctrines with such confidence?" Actually, the answer is quite simple. The RCC has never claimed to base its teachings solely on Scripture. It bestows on post-Apostolic traditions the status of "truth," even if they deny Scripture.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was completed in 1992 — six years in the making — and, according to Pope John Paul II, was designed to "faithfully and systematically present the teachings of Sacred Scripture, the living Tradition in the Church and the authentic Magisterium" ("Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum*," CCC, p. 4).

The authors of *CCC: Familystyle* state that these volumes were written for families. "Thus, we do not use a language of theory and pure ideal, but one that you use daily in your conversation with your family" (Vol.1, p.1). This work was awarded "First Place Winner" in 1995 by the Catholic Press Association.

What do these documents say about Scripture and tradition? The progression of reasoning in the *CCC* is very slippery, and ultimately contradictory. First, they assert that in Christ, God "has said everything. ... the Son is the Father's definitive Word; so there will be no further Revelation after him" (pp.22, 24). This sounds like God's Word is limited to the time period of Christ and the Apostles. But apparently it is not, for the *CCC* goes on to affirm that ...

Even if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries (p.23).

This is a pivotal statement for it opens the door for them to define the "Christian faith" in such a way that "Revelation" is no longer to be found only in Christ and his Apostles.

The bridge created to justify "Revelation" in post-apostolic ages is "apostolic succession," by which they posit that "the apostles left bishops as their successors [and] gave them their own position of teaching authority" (p.25). "Apostolic succession," they aver, guarantees that the original apostolic message will be "preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time" (p.25).

So now we are told that we have Scripture and "Tradition," which is a "living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit," but "distinct from Sacred Scripture" (p.25). In this theological-historical construct, then, two touchstones emerge—Scripture *and* Tradition.

As a result, the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, "does not derive her certainty about all revealed truth from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence." (p.26).

That pretty well sums up Rome's fatal problem: "the Church ... does not derive her certainty about all truths from the holy Scriptures alone." Having added its Tradition onto Scripture, it can now be certain and dogmatic about some things from sources other than Scripture. This effectively allows Rome to flagrantly contradict Scripture without impunity.

Claiming that the maintenance and "authentic interpretation" of the faith was given solely "to the bishops in communion with the successors of Peter, the Bishop of Rome" (p.27), Catholicism can then command obedience to unscriptural dogmas "in a form obliging Christian people to an irrevocable adherence of faith" (p.28).

Mindful of Christ's words to his apostles: "He who hears you, hears me," the faithful receive with docility the teachings and directives that their pastors give them in different forms (p.27).

Receiving with "docility" means that the constituents cannot question the Magisterium. To disagree with the "teaching office of the Church" is *ipso facto* to disagree with God himself.

The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him (p.28).

Thus Rome has constructed an air-tight system which guarantees that all her traditions have the authority of Christ himself. Further, Rome communicates to her subjects that as long as they do obeisance to her ways, salvation is assured.

It is clear therefore that, in the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others. Working together, each in its own way, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls (p.29).

The big problem for Rome is that many of her doctrinal pillars are antithetical to God's Word (cf. Robert Zins, *Salvation by Grace or Merit? An Examination of Key Roman Catholic Teachings Searching Together*, 1988, 27pp.). Catholicism has denied the very gospel she claims to be entrusted with. Having posited that the "sacred Tradition" of post-Apostolic times "must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence" (p.26), there is no way to test this Tradition against anything. Because the "Holy Mother Church" has said something the "faithful" must receive it as true.

With Rome's theology we are left with a dreadful situation in which the anti-Scriptural "sacred Tradition" of the Magisterium can be placed on par with the "Sacred Scripture." History clearly shows the outcome: the traditions of men have been elevated above God's Word and thus nullified it. The CCC states, "Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it" (p.27). This sounds good, but the reality is that the Magisterium rejects the Apostolic traditions deposited in the New Testament in order to propagate its false post-Apostolic notions. It refuses to allow the "sacred Tradition" to be evaluated by Scripture itself.

It is interesting to see how the Scripture/Tradition teaching in the CCC is filtered down into simple language in the CCC: *Familystyle*.

Of course, the pages of a fairly limited collection of writings [the Epistles] could not contain everything Jesus said or did or was. Other things about Jesus became part of the lives of those early Christians. They formed a community of believers. The leaders of the Church preserved what they had received from Jesus. This became the tradition of the Church.

So today we have two sources that contain the revelation of God. One is the Sacred Scriptures—the Bible. The other is the life of the Church, the gathered people, lived out as

collected in our teachings. We call this second source Tradition. Each source complements the other, and we are still discovering the richness of God's revelation.

The Magisterium of the Church preserves the truthfulness and accuracy of God's revelation. However, the world is always changing, and so are our culture and language. So part of the role of the Church is to update its teachings so that it can effectively communicate in different historical periods and to different cultures.

Thus the Church gathers its leaders from time to time in councils (Vol. 1, p.25).

We can note that the opening remarks imply that the Scriptures are an incomplete revelation, and insufficient as they stand. That which filled out what was lacking in Scripture became the Tradition. The Magisterium then guards and interprets God's revelation for the docile communicants. Again, it must be underscored that they elevate Tradition to the status of "the revelation of God."

We have seen unmistakably what has to be one of the key foundational flaws in Roman Catholicism. They unapologetically affirm that they do not look to Scripture alone for truth. "Sacred Tradition" for them must be revered as much as Scripture, and is just as much a source of "truth." Historically Protestantism has affirmed, on the other hand, that Scripture alone must be the touchstone of truth—not post-Apostolic traditions.

In fairness, however, it must be noted that Protestantism in practice has not lived up to this important affirmation. It has often been unwilling to test all of its traditions in the light of God's Word. It has allowed its own traditions to multiply and push aside Christ's Word. Thus, for those who confess *sola Scriptura*, the obvious error of Rome is a reminder of the importance of continually evaluating our individual and corporate lives as Christians against what Christ has said. John R. W. Stott reminds us how important a matter this is:

To me the essence of being a radical is being willing to subject one's inherited traditions and conventions to biblical scrutiny. ... We find it very difficult to be conservative in our relation to Scripture and radical in our application of Scripture to the modern world, and it's that combination of the two that we need. ... A lot of our personal security is found in our convictions; we develop a personal stance and find our security in it, and then when anybody disagrees we feel threatened (Evangelical Newsletter, April 30, 1982, p.3).

A current disturbing trend is the growing habit of evangelicals to join hands with Catholicism in various ways and gloss over the significant theological issues. Isn't Rome's stated position of not deriving certainty of truth from Scripture alone a rather far-reaching divide from the *sola Scriptura* of evangelicals? Yet evangelical dignitaries James Dobson and Chuck Colson in November, 2000, appeared at the Vatican to speak on family issues.

Their purpose was not to harmonize theological differences but to explore areas of common interest, including protection of the unborn, implications of homosexual activism, and preservation of premarital chastity and marital fidelity (*Focus on the Family*, February, 2001, p.22).

Dobson went on to say, "I think it's very important for Catholics and evangelicals to work together on the social and moral issues." This highlights the problem of issue-based instead of gospel-based cooperation. To make alliances with those who deny Christ's gospel in the name of restraining social evils is a counterproductive strategy, and shows that certain evangelicals value cultural agendas above the gospel itself.

Rome has erected an elaborate system that claims faithfulness to the written Word, demands obedience to traditions that cannot be found in the written Word, and reigns over its constituents

by requiring unquestioning submission to the dictates of the Magisterium. The result is an ecclesiastical monster that denies the simplicity of Christ at every turn. It is sad that even those who confess “Scripture only” often end up functioning like Catholics in that they refuse to let their traditions be examined by Christ’s Word (cf. Jon Zens, “How Roman Catholic Are We?,” *Searching Together*, 14:1, 1985, pp. 24–27, 45). The lesson to be learned is that we will all be judged by the will of Jesus revealed in his Word, not by any word mere persons have spoken or written. May we take the words of James to heart: “Be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (1:22).

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Did Mary Remain a Virgin? A Closer Look at Matthew 1:18–25

by Eric Svendsen

Matthew 1:18–25 is a key text in any discussion about Mary’s person and role in the church, as well as a major support for the orthodox view of the virgin birth of Christ. Conservative Roman Catholics and Evangelicals are in agreement on the latter, and so no attempt will be made here to enter into that discussion.¹ It is the former issue that concerns us here. The passage reads as follows:

“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ² came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through

¹ For a detailed summary of this discussion see D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 8 (ed. Frank E. Gaebelin; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 71–81; and John McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 278–342.

² There are two instances of variant readings in the phrase “the birth of Jesus Christ” (Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ ἢ γένεσις). The reading adopted by NA²⁶ for the first variant, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, is supported by (1 (C L Z Δ (F¹ 28 33 565 579 700 892 and a good number of minuscules, enjoying wide geographic distribution. Aside from the aid of B in the reading Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, the other two variants have only scant support (the other variant is Χριστουῦ). The second part of the phrase adopted by NA²⁶ is γένεσις², which gains support from many of the aforementioned mss. ((1 (X (φ¹ 579), but this time also from B. The variant γέννησις² is supported primarily (though not insignificantly) by L F¹³ 28 33 565 700 892, and has much additional minuscule and patristic support as well.²

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the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet³ “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.” When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son.⁴ And he gave him the name Jesus.⁵

The Meaning of the Phrase “before they came together” in Matthew 1:18

What is meant by the phrase “before they came together” (πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτοῦ); sexual relations or residing together?⁶ John McHugh allows that the verb συνελθεῖν does in some instances have the meaning “to have sexual intercourse,”⁷ but rejects that specific meaning here⁸. He concludes that the meaning “living together” is the proper exegesis here, but also that the virginity of Mary is implied since, although in Judaea sexual relations between a betrothed couple may have been allowed⁹, it was certainly frowned upon in Galilee where the custom was for the girl to remain a virgin until the marriage ceremony¹⁰.

phrase adopted by NA²⁶ is γένεσις which gains support from many of the aforementioned mss. (φ¹CLZΛΘF 579), but this time also from B. The variant φ¹CLZΔΘF is supported primarily (though not insignificantly) by L F¹³ 28 33 565 700 892, and has much additional minuscule and patristic support as well.

³ Several witnesses, including D 267 954 1582^{*vid} and it^{a?b,c,d}, have Ἡσαΐου before τοῦ προφήτου. However, its absence from the majority of mss., as well as its limited distribution, point here to a scribal gloss; see B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Biblia-Druck, 1975), 8.

⁴ NA²⁶ has adopted the reading υἱόν, supported by N B Z F¹ F¹³ and 33. The variant τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς τὸν πρωτότοκον, almost certainly a harmonization of Luke 2:7, is supported less significantly by C D^c (D* and L οὐτ αὐτῆς?) W D 28 565 579 892 and a handful of minuscules.

⁵ All quotations of Scripture in this work are taken from the NIV unless otherwise noted.

⁶ Both Chrysostom (*Homily on the Gospel of St. Matthew 4:5*) and Jerome (*Against Helvidius 1:4*) subscribed to the former.

⁷ Cf. the lexicons of Liddell & Scott and BAGD. Wis 7:2 seems to be the only other occurrence with this meaning in the literature of the OT, NT and Apocrypha. W. Mundle, “Come,” *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 3 (ed. Colin Brown; Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Exeter: Paternoster, 1975–78), 322, cites 1 Cor 7:5 (“Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you”) as an instance of συνέρχομαι. Unfortunately, the Greek has πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἡτε, not συνέρχομαι.

⁸ McHugh, 158.

⁹ See Raymond Brown et al, *Mary in the New Testament* (eds., R. Brown et al; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 83–84. This work shall hence be referred to as MNT, and its editors as the MNT taskforce. Also, McHugh has shown from Mishnahic sources (*Kiddushin* “Betrothals,” and

No doubt McHugh is correct about the implications he draws for Mary’s prenuptial virginity. Yet *this* implication from the verb *συνελθεῖν* cannot be maintained while the implication for sexual relations after marriage is denied—for this too was the normal custom for a betrothed Jewish couple, regardless of region.¹¹ Moreover, if we take this simply as a reference to Joseph and Mary taking up residence together without thought of ensuing sexual relations, Matthew’s point regarding the virgin birth is then quite lost. If he is attempting to show (as he surely is in this passage) that the birth of Christ was a *virginal* birth, then the phrase “before they came together” must mean “before they engaged in sexual relations,” and cannot mean “before they began to reside together platonically”; for if the latter is true then it would be no more remarkable—nor significant for that matter—that Mary became pregnant *before* they came together, than it would be if she became pregnant *after* they came together.

If, then, we are to adopt McHugh’s interpretation, the passage offers no direct support for the virgin birth of Jesus. McHugh cannot have it both ways. Either Matthew intends for us to understand a virginal conception in this phrase, in which case *πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτοῦ* must also entail sexual relations after marriage; or Matthew, intending to preserve the perpetual virginity of Mary, wants us to understand the phrase *πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτοῦ* as nothing more than a platonic living arrangement, in which case support for the virgin birth of Jesus must be sought elsewhere.¹²

The Meaning of “until” in Matthew 1:25

Matthew next tells us that Joseph “did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus” (1:24–25). At issue in this passage is just what impact it has (if any) on Mary’s perpetual virginity. There are at least two points in the phrase *οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτὴν ἕως οὗ ἔτεκεν υἱόν* on which Evangelicals and Catholics can agree. Both sides agree (1) that *ἐγίνωσκεν* refers to sexual union,¹³ and (2) that Mary remained a virgin until she gave birth. Many Evangelical scholars, pressing the implications of the passage further, argue that the passage not only demonstrates Mary’s prenatal virginity, but also directly conflicts with any

Ketuboth “Marriage Deeds”) that sexual relations between the betrothed were allowed in Judaism, at least after the Jewish Revolt of AD 132–135. He notes that a betrothed girl whose fiancé had died was to wait a period of three months before marrying again in order to ascertain whether or not she had conceived a child (McHugh, 161 n. 20).

¹⁰ McHugh, 163.

¹¹ Matthew alludes here to the two-step marriage process of that time. In the first step, *’ĒRŪSĪN* (betrothal, which is a “legally ratified marriage,” *MNT*, 114 n. 241), the couple exchanged vows before witnesses but continued to live separately for a period of about a year. In the second step, *NĪŪĪN*, the husband received the woman into his home, initiated regular marital relations with her, and took financial responsibility for her (*ibid.*, 84).

¹² Our understanding of the phrase “before they came together” is undoubtedly the earliest one. Irenaeus writes: “To this effect [the prophets, elders, apostles] were [saying,] that before Joseph had come together with Mary, *while she therefore remained in virginity*, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost’,” *Against Heresies* 3.21. Such a statement clearly shows that Irenaeus understood the phrase to be speaking of a time before normal marital relations ensued.

¹³ As it does in the case of Mary’s statement in [Luke 1:34](#). See also [Gen 4:1](#) and [1 Sam 1:19](#).

notion of ongoing, postnatal virginity.¹⁴ Matthew tells us that Joseph abstained from sexual union with Mary *until* she gave birth, implying that normal marital relations ensued after the birth of Jesus.

Roman Catholic scholars and apologists counter this point by appealing to the use of “until” (ἕως) elsewhere in Scripture. Karl Keating, for instance, argues that this word means only that “some action did not happen up to a certain point, but does not imply that the action did happen later.”¹⁵ He appeals to several OT passages where ἕως has this meaning, including [2 Sam 6:23](#) (“Michal daughter of Saul had no children to [ἕως] the day of her death”), [Gen 8:7](#) (“and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until [ἕως] the water had dried up from the earth”), and [Deut 34:6](#) (“He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to [ἕως] this day no one knows where his grave is”),¹⁶ and concludes from this that “nothing at all can be proved from the use of the word ‘till’ in [Matthew 1:25](#).”¹⁷

In most of the passages cited above, ἕως does indeed have the meaning Keating assigns to it.¹⁸ Michal certainly did not have children *after* her death, and it is doubtful that the writer of

¹⁴ F. D. Brunner, *The Christbook: A Historical/Theological Commentary* (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 37; R. T. France, *Matthew* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 80; and to some extent, Craig Blomberg, *Matthew* (The New American Commentary, vol. 22; ed. David S. Dockery; Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 61.

¹⁵ Karl Keating, *Catholicism and Fundamentalism: The Attack on “Romanism” by “Bible Christians”* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 285. So also D. J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), 36.

¹⁶ Keating, 285. He also cites the apocryphal passage [1 Macc 5:54](#)

¹⁷ *ibid.* Roman Catholic apologists often cite Calvin’s comments on this passage as though he were in support of Mary’s perpetual virginity. However, in so doing they misrepresent Calvin who says simply:

Let us rest satisfied with this, that no just and well-grounded inference can be drawn from these words of the Evangelist, as to what took place after the birth of Christ. . . . It is said that Joseph knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: but this is limited to that very time. What took place afterwards, the historian (Matthew) does not inform us. Such is well known to have been the practice of the inspired writers. Certainly, no man will obstinately keep up the argument, except from an extreme fondness for disputation. (*Harmony of the Gospels*, vol. 1).

All Calvin intends to relay to us is that we do not know *from this passage* whether or not Mary remained a virgin (although, even here it must be noted that Calvin shows no knowledge of the usage of the Greek phrase used in this passage, for which see below). Yet, when this is compared to Calvin’s comments elsewhere, his belief that Mary in fact did not remain a virgin clearly emerges (see the note on [Luke 1:34](#) later in this work).

¹⁸ Keating’s use of [Gen 8:7](#) is unfortunately based on a bad translation of the Hebrew and does not make the point Keating thinks it does. Keating cites the Douay-Rheims version of the passage (“went forth and did not return, till the waters were dried up”) and then states: “In fact, we know the raven never returned at all,” *ibid.* The Hebrew עָדִיבָשֶׁת הַמַּיִם, however, is better reflected in the newer Catholic translation the *NAB*: “It flew back and forth until the waters dried,” which is essentially the same rendition given by the *NIV* (“it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up”) and the *NASB* (“which went forth to and fro, until the waters

[Deut 34:6](#) meant to imply that the whereabouts of Moses' body would be revealed after the day he wrote this passage. Nor is there any doubt that passages with this meaning of ἕως could be multiplied. Yet Keating does not take into account the differences of the Greek phrases used in the passages he cites, and in [Matt 1:25](#). In each of the passages cited above, ἕως alone is used. Yet in [Matt 1:25](#), the construction ἕως οὗ is used.¹⁹ The difference of meaning between these two phrases can be appreciated only through a comparative study of the semantic range of each phrase within the NT itself.

A Comparison of the Various Uses of ἕως in the New Testament

ἕως occurs in its various forms some 146 times in the NT.²⁰ There are several Greek constructions of ἕως with the particle in the NT, including ἕως ἄν, ἕως οὗ, and ἕως ὅτου.²¹ Each of these will be considered in turn, beginning with the use of ἕως by itself.

The Meaning of ἕως in the New Testament

When used alone, ἕως occurs 104 times in the NT.²² The breakdown of occurrences by author is Matthew (43x), Luke-Acts (34x), Pauline corpus (12x), Johannine corpus (11x), Hebrews (2x), and James (2x). Clearly Matthew's use is most significant for our purposes since not only does it constitute the bulk of occurrences of ἕως in the entire NT (41%),²³ but it is also the book in which the passage in question is found. When it occurs in this form (i.e., without ἄν, οὗ, or ὅτου), ἕως can take the prepositional (spatial or logical) meaning "to"; i.e., from point A to point B ([Matt 1:17](#); "from Abraham to David"²⁴; [Mark 14:54](#), "Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest"); or the conjunctive meaning "until" [an

¹⁹ The argument of Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary* (Etr. W. C. Linss; Minneapolis, 1989), 124, and Alan Schreck, *Catholic and Christian: An Explanation of Commonly Misunderstood Catholic Beliefs* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1984), 175, are similarly flawed; as is that of David Currie, *Born Fundamentalist: Born Again Catholic* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 158, who cites [Ps 110:1](#) ("Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet") in support of the Catholic interpretation of [Matt 1:25](#). Unfortunately for Currie, the writer there uses ἕως ἄν, not ἕως οὗ.

²⁰ There are 1,564 occurrences in the OT and Apocrypha.

²¹ F. Blass and A. Debrunner, eds. (*A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [ETr. and ed. R. W. Funk; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961], (216 [3])), cite other constructions as well, including ἕως πότε, ἕως κάτω, ἕως ἄρτι, ἕως σήμερον. But these types of constructions are outside of our scope since each of the accompanying words are stand-alone words and not mere particles.

²² 1,454 times in the OT and Apocrypha.

²³ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 32, has rightly noted that, because of the number of occurrences, "until" is primarily a Matthean word.

²⁴ It is not likely that this should be seen primarily as a reference to time (i.e., "from the time of Abraham to the time of David") since the author intends to count generations here, not to show spans of time.

event, point, degree] (Luke 12:59, “you will not get out *until* you have paid the last penny”), or the conjunctive “while” (Luke 17:8, “wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat”).²⁵

Within the two broader categories of the prepositional and conjunctive usages, we may divide ἕως into the sub-categories of *space*, *time*, and *extent*. Spatial ἕως occurs thirty-three times in the NT and is almost always prepositional.²⁶ However, there are eight occurrences of this form of ἕως that may carry a secondary connotation of *extent* (e.g., Matt 11:23, “will you be lifted up *as far as*²⁷ the skies?”; Matt 24:31, “from one end of the heavens *to* the other”), and four that may carry a secondary connotation of *time* (e.g., Matt 1:17, “fourteen generations in all from Abraham *to* David”). Of those occurrences that have the spatial meaning, over half (eighteen) are found in Luke/Acts, eleven are in Matthew, two are in Mark, one is in John, and one is in Paul.

ἕως is used also where the idea of *extent* is primary. Included here are the extent of Jesus’ sufferings (Matt 26:38, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow *to the point* of [ἕως] death”), the extent to which Christians are to forgive others (Matt 18:22, “*up to* seventy-seven times”), the extent to which Herod was prepared to reward the daughter of Herodias (Mark 6:23, “*up to* half my kingdom”), and the extent to which we are to understand Paul’s message (2 Cor 1:13, “And I hope that, as you have understood us in part, you will come *to understand fully*” [ἕως τέλους ἐπιγνώσεσθε]). There are thirteen examples of this usage in the NT, two of which may have a secondary spatial connotation (Matt 24:27, “lightning that comes from the east is visible even *until* the west”; and Mark 13:27, “from the ends of the earth *to* the ends of the heavens”). Of those occurrences that have extent as the meaning, five are found in Matthew, three are in Mark, two are in Luke/Acts, two are in Paul, and one is in Hebrews.

A third and final way that ἕως is used by itself is the *temporal* usage denoting a period of time. This category, consisting of fifty-eight instances of ἕως (well over half of all instances where ἕως occurs by itself in the NT), is by far the largest. Of these, as many as thirty mean “until a specified time (but not after)”²⁸ (e.g., 2 Thess 2:7, “will continue to do so *until* he is taken out of the way”; Matt 2:15; “[and left for Egypt] where he stayed *until* the death of Herod”). In such instances of ἕως the time frame of the action of the main clause (the protasis) is clearly limited by the subordinate clause (the apodosis) (i.e., “up to this time but no further”). Five within this last set have secondary connotations of extent (two in Matt 17:17, two in Mark 9:19, and one in Luke 9:41—all of which record the same saying of Jesus), and one has a secondary meaning of “while” (Luke 17:8). At least twelve²⁹ in this category mean “up to a specified time (with no reference to cessation or continuance of the action of the main clause)” (Matt 11:12, “from the days of John the Baptist *until* now”). Thirteen mean “to a certain point (*and continuing*)” (Mark 13:19, “unequaled from the beginning, when God created the world, *until* now—and never to be equaled again”). In such instances the action of the main clause continues into the subordinate clause (i.e., “up to this time and beyond”). Only three instances of temporal

²⁵ According to *BDF*, ἕως was “originally entirely a conjunction and became a preposition only in the Hellenistic period,” (216. See also N. Turner, *Syntax: A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. III (ed. J. H. Moulton; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 276.

²⁶ The only instance where it has the conjunctive meaning “until” is found in Matt 2:9, “[The star] went ahead of them *until* it stopped over the place where the child was.”

²⁷ *BDF*, (216 (3).

²⁸ But perhaps only twenty-eight if we exclude from this subset Matt 11:13 and Luke 17:8.

²⁹ Perhaps thirteen if we include Matt 11:13 in this subset.

ἕως are certainly to be translated “while” (or, “during the period in which”)³⁰ (e.g., [John 9:4](#), “*while* [ἕως] it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me”). Of those occurrences that have the temporal meaning, fifteen are found in Matthew, fourteen are in Luke / Acts, ten are in the Johannine literature, nine are in Paul, seven are in Mark, two are in James, and one is in Hebrews.

When used alone, then, ἕως sometimes takes on a spatial connotation (roughly a third of all occurrences), is sometimes used to show extent (roughly ten percent of all occurrences), and sometimes carries a temporal meaning (roughly fifty-six percent of all occurrences). Within this last category, a mere handful mean “while” (less than one percent of all instances of ἕως occurring by itself); twenty-two percent mean “until a specified time (but not after)”; and forty-three percent mean “up to a specified time” with either no reference to cessation or continuance of the action of the main clause, or where the writer wants to show that the action of the main clause continues even after the action of the subordinate clause has occurred.

The Meaning of ἕως ἄν in the New Testament

When used with ἄν, ἕως occurs twenty times in the NT,³¹ almost all of which occur with direct reference to the *ESCHATON*.³² Moreover, all instances of ἕως ἄν are temporal, and may be translated “up to a specified time” (e.g., [Matt 10:23](#), “you will not finish going through the cities of Israel *until* the Son of Man comes”). The overwhelming majority of occurrences (fourteen) imply neither continuance nor cessation of the action of the main clause by the initiation of the action of the subordinate clause. In such cases, the phrase may be translated as “up to a specified time [with no reference to cessation or continuance]” ([Matt 12:20](#), “a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, *until* he leads justice to victory”). On the other hand, fewer than a third of all occurrences imply cessation or modification of the action of the main clause by the action of the subordinate clause, giving the meaning “up to a specified time [but not beyond]” ([Matt 10:11](#), “stay at his house *until* you leave”).³³ There seems to be no instance of ἕως ἄν where continuance of the action of the main verb is certainly implied. Moreover, there seems to be no favored usage of ἕως ἄν with the negative—it is used both in passages that indicate cessation of the action of the main clause (e.g., [Matt 5:26](#), “you will not get out *until* you have paid the last penny”), as well as in passages where neither cessation nor continuance is implied (e.g., [Matt 16:28](#), “some who are standing here will not taste death *until* they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom”).

The construction ἕως ἄν, then, seems to occur mostly in eschatological contexts (though not always), or where the connotation is primarily (or even strictly) temporal, or where the writer wants to imply no necessary cessation, modification, or continuance of the action of the main clause due to the action of the subordinate clause. It is found eleven times in Matthew, four times in Luke/Acts, three times in Mark, once in Paul, and once in Hebrews.

³⁰ Though [Luke 17:8](#) may be included in this category as well, putting the total at four.

³¹ There are 105 occurrences in the OT and Apocrypha.

³² The four exceptions are [Matt 2:13](#), [5:26](#), [10:11](#), and [Mark 6:10](#). The latter two are parallel passages.

³³ There are six altogether. In addition to [Matt 10:11](#) we may also mention [Matt 2:13](#); [5:26](#); [23:39](#); [Mark 6:10](#); and [1 Cor 4:5](#).

The Meaning of ἕως ὅτου in the New Testament

The construction ἕως ὅτου occurs only five times in the NT, all of which are in the Gospels.³⁴ Moreover, all occurrences are temporal; two have the temporal meaning “while” (Matt 5:25 and Luke 13:8), while the other three mean “until” (Luke 12:50; 22:16; and John 9:18). All three of the latter are instances in which the action of the main clause is modified by the action of the subordinate clause (“until [but not after]”). There are three occurrences in Luke, two in Matthew, and one in John. Most grammars treat this construction as a variant form of ἕως οὗ, and so its meaning holds significance for the passage under consideration.³⁵

The Meaning of ἕως οὗ in the New Testament

This construction is used in Matt 1:25 and so is of special interest here. It occurs only seventeen times in the NT,³⁶ and all are temporal. Two of these have the meaning “while” (Matt 14:22; 26:36),³⁷ whereas the other fifteen occurrences are instances in which the action of the main clause is limited by the action of the subordinate clause and require the meaning “until a specified time (but not after).” Hence, the disciples were not to tell anyone what they had seen “until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead” (Matt 17:9), but they surely were not to keep silent afterwards. The wicked servant was to be tortured “until he should pay back all he owed” (Matt 18:34), but that torture (it is implied) would cease after payment had been rendered. The woman who loses the coin sweeps the house and searches carefully until she finds it (Luke 15:8), but ceases the search once it is found. Similarly Jesus’ promise to abstain from eating and drinking at the table will be kept only “until the kingdom of God comes” (Luke 22:18), after which he will inaugurate the Messianic Banquet.³⁸

Other instances carry this same meaning. The disciples were to stay in Jerusalem after Christ’s ascension “until [they had] been clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49), but then were expected to leave Jerusalem and take the gospel into all the world. The rooster would not crow until Peter disowned Christ three times (John 13:38); but then it is clear that the rooster did crow. The days of the purification rite which Paul observed (Acts 21:26) lasted only until a sacrifice was offered. Paul’s Jewish adversaries vowed not to eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul (Acts 23:12; 23:14; 23:21); clearly they intended to eat afterwards. Likewise, Festus ordered Paul to be “kept” (τηρεῖσθαι, i.e., in Caesarea, as opposed to Jerusalem where the Jews wanted him tried, and in anticipation of his imminent journey to Rome where Paul wished to be tried) until he could send him to Rome (Acts 25:21); once he left for Rome he was no longer kept in Caesarea. Finally, Peter entreats us to pay attention to the word of the prophets “as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises” (2 Pet 1:19)—doubtless a reference to the *parousia*, after which it will no longer be necessary to turn to the

³⁴ There are fourteen occurrences of this construction in the OT and Apocrypha.

³⁵ See, e.g., *BDF*, (383).

³⁶ There are eighty-five occurrences in the OT and Apocrypha.

³⁷ Contra the puzzling statement by *BDF* that ἕως οὗ “only means ‘until’ as in classical,” (455). But see *BADG*.

³⁸ See Eric Svendsen, *The Table of the Lord: An Examination of the Setting of the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament and its Significance as an Expression of Community* (Atlanta: New Testament Restoration Foundation, 1996), 111–145 passim.

word of the prophets as a guide which navigates us through a dark place; Christ himself will supercede any such need.

There are two instances of ἕως οὗ (parallel passages of each other) that, although having primarily a temporal meaning, have a secondary connotation of extent: [Matt 13:33](#) (“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour *until* it worked all through the dough”), and [Luke 13:21](#) (“It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour *until* it worked all through the dough”). Both *could* mean “*to the extent that* the flour and yeast were thoroughly mixed.” However, even here a primarily temporal meaning is not thereby excluded, for it is doubtful that the woman intends to continue mixing the ingredients after she has thoroughly mixed them.

The constructions in this category that come closest to [Matt 1:25](#) are, perhaps, those instances of ἕως οὗ where the main clause is negated (οὐκ, [Matt 1:25](#); cf. μηδενι, , [Matt 17:9](#); οὐ μη, [Luke 22:18](#); μη, [John 13:38](#); μήτε, [Acts 23:12, 14, 21](#)).³⁹ In each case where the negative is used with the main clause, it means that the action of the main clause will be in effect *only until* the action of the subordinate clause has been accomplished; that is to say, there are no instances of *extent* or the temporal “while” in this category. Hence, the disciples *will* witness the transfiguration after the resurrection ([Matt 17:9](#)); Jesus *will* eat and drink again in the kingdom ([Luke 22:18](#)); the rooster *will* crow after Peter’s denials ([John 13:38](#)); and the Jews *do* intend to eat and drink after they kill Paul ([Acts 23:12, 14, 21](#)).

The Meaning of [Matthew 1:25](#)

We may now apply this understanding of ἕως οὗ to the passage under consideration: “But he did not know her until she gave birth to a son.” We may safely eliminate several of the meanings we have established for these constructions. It cannot mean here “while” or “to the extent that,” as this construction may mean elsewhere; such meanings would render the present passage nonsensical. Nor can it have a prepositional / spatial connotation (from point A to point B) as ἕως sometimes has when used alone; the usage here is clearly conjunctive / temporal. The meaning “until (and continuing)” is not impossible, and many Roman Catholic scholars (including those on the *MNT* taskforce) appeal to this meaning for [Matt 1:25](#): “Thus, *in itself* the verse tells us nothing about what happened by way of marital relations after Jesus was born.”⁴⁰ The taskforce goes on to assert that ἕως οὗ with a negative “often has no implication at all about what happened after the limit of the ‘until’ was reached.”⁴¹

³⁹ [Luke 15:8](#) is not included in this category since the negative there is used to introduce a question, not to negate the action of the main clause.

⁴⁰ *MNT*, 86.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 86–87, n. 177. So also Harrington, 36: “The text neither confirms nor denies the perpetual virginity of Mary.” Protestant scholars who take this view include Robert Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary for His Handbook on a Mixed Church Under Persecution*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 25, who says, “By itself ἕως οὗ, which belongs to Matthew’s preferred diction (4, 2), does not necessarily imply that Joseph and Mary entered into normal sexual relations after Jesus’ birth”; Richard B. Gardner, *Matthew* (Believers Church Bible Commentary; Scottsdale, P.A.: Herald Press, 1991), 41, who states that “the language of the text leaves open the question of how Joseph and Mary related to each other *after* Jesus’ birth”; and to some degree Blomberg who states, “The grammatical construction translated ‘until’ strongly

However true this assertion may be for LXX usage of ἕως οὗ,⁴² this meaning for this construction is unattested elsewhere in the NT. Had Matthew wanted to convey the notion that Joseph refrained from having sexual relations with Mary even *post partum*, he might have used ἕως alone, since as many as one fifth of all instances of the temporal use of ἕως” in this form has this meaning. Better still, he could have used ἕως ἄν since, as has already been pointed out, all instances of this form are temporal, and most imply no limitation of the action of the main clause by the action of the subordinate clause, even when used with the negative.

Whatever meaning we finally adopt for ἕως οὗ in **Matt 1:25** must be tempered by the fact that this phrase never elsewhere has the meaning “until (and continuing)” in the NT.⁴³ Moreover, when used with the negative, this phrase (at least so far as the NT is concerned) *always* means “not [main clause] until [subordinate clause], after which [main clause] ensues.”⁴⁴ In light of this evidence, the most probable meaning for **Matt 1:25** is, “Joseph did not have sexual relations with Mary until she gave birth to a firstborn son; after which sexual relations ensued.”⁴⁵ If Matthew means to communicate to us that Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Jesus, we might expect him to use either ἕως alone or ἕως ἄν to show no necessary change in the action of the main clause—both are used with the negative where this meaning is intended (**Matt 24:21**, “unequaled from the beginning of the world until [ἕως] now”; **Matt 5:18**, “not the least stroke of a pen will by any means disappear from the Law until [ἕως ἄν] everything is accomplished”).⁴⁶

suggests (but does not prove) that Mary and Joseph proceeded to have normal sexual relations after Jesus’ birth” (61). Protestant scholars that see significance in this phrase include Brunner who notes that “the burden of proof rests on those who would contest the simple meaning of the word *until*” (37); and France who states that “the Greek expression for *not until* would normally suggest that intercourse did take place after the end of this period. . . . There is no biblical warrant for the tradition of the ‘perpetual virginity’ of Mary” (80).

⁴² The meaning of ἕως οὗ in the LXX (and the other literature related to the NT) is too large a study to be included here. The reader is referred to this author’s Ph.D. dissertation, *Who is My Mother? The Role and Status of the Mother of Jesus in the New Testament and in Roman Catholicism* (Atlanta: NTRF, 1999), available at www.ntrmin.org.

⁴³ Nor does ἕως ὅτου have this meaning.

⁴⁴ Contra Keating’s unfortunate statement that “until” in the Bible “means only that some action did not happen up to a certain point; it does not imply that the action did happen later,” 285. A. H. M’Neile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1961), 10, swings too far in the opposite direction when he applies this rule to ἕως categorically (but he does not consider **Matt 24:21**, although this rule certainly seems to apply to ἕως ὅτου with the negative).

⁴⁵ This point is strengthened by the observation of A. Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew* (London: Paternoster, 1909), that the imperfect ἐγίνωσκειν is more forceful than even the aorist would have been: “it hardly needs argument that, in such a context, ‘he used not to’ or ‘he was not in the habit of’ means more than ‘he did not.’ It is quite true that the aorist, ‘he knew her not until,’ would have implied that she subsequently had children by him. But the imperfect implies this still more strongly,” 9. See also A. Willoughby, *St. Matthew* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1913), 10. Contra McHugh (204) who argues just the opposite.

⁴⁶ Cf. also **Matt 10:23; 12:20; 16:28; 22:44**.

So far from remaining silent on this issue, the Scriptures here provide us with positive evidence of Mary’s normal marital relations after the birth of Jesus.⁴⁷ Matthew’s use of ἕως, both in the sheer number of occurrences as well as in the extent of varying constructions, is unmatched by any other NT writer. Yet even he will not use ἕως οὗ in a way that violates the meaning found everywhere else in the NT. When he wants to convey that the action of the main clause continues *into* or *after* the action of the subordinate clause, he prefers ἕως or ἕως ἄν. When he wants to convey no such continuation (or discontinuation) of the action of the main clause, he prefers ἕως ἄν. Yet, both of these constructions are used by Matthew to give other senses as well. The ratio of usage between the meaning “until (but not after)” and “until (and continuing or no reference to continuation / discontinuation) in Matthew is, in the case of temporal ἕως alone, ten to five,⁴⁸ and in the case of ἕως ἄν, four to seven.⁴⁹ Not so in the case of ἕως οὗ and ἕως οὗτοῦ. Both constructions are used solely—not only by Matthew but also by all NT writers who use this construction—to convey that the action of the main clause is discontinued by the action of the subordinate clause.⁵⁰ [Matt 1:25](#) is just such a case, and there seems to be no justification for assigning to ἕως οὗ here any other meaning than that demanded by normal usage elsewhere in the NT.

Biblical Unity or Papal Conformity?

By Richard Bennett and Michael de Semlyen

Papal Penitence

⁴⁷ Contra Currie, who thinks, “there is simply no Bible passage that refutes Mary’s perpetual virginity ... There [is] no proof either way in Scripture,” 158–59. In support of his view of [Matthew 1:25](#), Currie appeals to [Ps 110:1](#) and [2 Sam 6:23](#) where the English word “until” implies no continuation of the action of the main clause after the action of the subordinate clause. Unfortunately, neither passage has the construction found in [Matthew 1:25](#). Currie betrays his prior loyalties early on in his discussion of Mary: “On reflection, Mary’s perpetual virginity makes the most sense. Even without a vow of celibacy, can anyone doubt that Joseph would have refrained from marital relations with the woman who bore the very Son of God?,” 159. Currie’s reasoning is clouded by his *a priori* devotion to Mary. It is only the mindset that views marital relations as somehow “impure” (as Currie, citing [Rev 14:4](#), later implies, 160), or views Mary as a supernatural being—or both—that could then conclude that Joseph, as her husband, must refrain from sexual relations with her. In any case, such a conclusion is certainly not based on exegesis of the passage.

⁴⁸ Compare this to the ratio of thirty to twenty-five for the entire NT. Matthew reverses the normal NT usage.

⁴⁹ Just over the six to fourteen ratio for the entire NT.

⁵⁰ The ratio for these two constructions combined is seven to zero (Matthew) and twenty-two to zero (the NT)

On Sunday, March 12, 2000, the first Sunday of Lent, the Pope presided over a solemn ceremony called, “The Day of Pardon” in St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome, in which he asked God for forgiveness for the historical wrongs of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). The ceremony was presented as another profoundly significant event in the RC Church’s “Millennium Jubilee Holy Year” and a further step, unprecedented but necessary, in the process of unity. It was a modern media event staged for maximum impact to encourage “unity.” The impression given is that it is a genuine attempt to wipe the slate clean and to apologize for the past wrongs of the Church.

Careful examination, however, shows that the Pope’s “Day of Pardon” was in fact not an apology, but rather a day of deception. In this service, the Pope continually prayed, purportedly as a Christian, while never admitting any of the horrendous sins of the Church of Rome. An egregious example from the prepared text that was used is found in Section III, “Confession of Sins Which Have Harmed the Unity of the Body of Christ”⁽¹⁾ The set prayer of the representative of the Roman Curia was as follows, “Let us pray that our recognition of the sins which have rent the unity of the Body of Christ and wounded fraternal charity will facilitate the way to reconciliation and communion among all Christians.” This was followed by silent prayer, and then the prayer of “The Holy Father” addressed to the “Merciful Father,”

“Merciful Father, on the night before his Passion your Son prayed for the unity of those who believe in him: in disobedience to his will, however, believers have opposed one another, becoming divided, and have mutually condemned one another and fought against one another. We urgently implore your forgiveness and we beseech the gift of a repentant heart, so that all Christians, reconciled with you and with one another will be able, in one body and in one spirit, to experience anew the joy of full communion. We ask this through Christ our Lord.”

If the Pope and the Roman Curia were really serious about their prayer offered to Holy God, they must face the fact that condemning curses of their Council of Trent were not mentioned nor repented of, including the condemnation of the Biblical Gospel and historical biblical Christianity, which led to the wholesale slaughter of millions of Christians during the 667 years of the Inquisition, and which have never been revoked, Vatican Council II notwithstanding. If this prayer were answered, it would be necessary to dismantle the RCC with its false gospel, papal infallibility, and “irreformable”⁽²⁾, which clearly the Pope and his Curia have no intention of doing.

“The Week of Christian Unity”

The gathering of mainstream churches at St. Paul’s Basilica in Rome earlier this year is thought to have been the largest assembly of Christian leaders with a Pope since the Vatican

⁽¹⁾ www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/jubilevents/events_day_pardon

⁽²⁾ “This infallibility, however, with which the divine redeemer wished to endow his Church in defining doctrine pertaining to faith and morals...the Roman Pontiff...enjoys...when...he proclaims in an absolute decision...For this reason his definitions are rightly said to be **irreformable** by their very nature...” No. 28, *Lumen Gentium*, in *Vatican Council II The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Austin Flannery, Ed., 1981 ed. (Northport, NY: Costello Publ. Co., 1975) p. 380.

Council II in the early 1960s. On January 18th, the Tuesday of the week which had been designated 'The Week of Christian Unity' in the 'Holy Year, 2000', leaders representing four fifths of Eastern Orthodoxy gathered alongside Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists and Pentecostals. They were participating in celebration of the opening of the 'Holy Door at St. Paul Outside the Walls'. Archbishop George Carey, Primate of the Church of England, and Metropolitan Athanasius, representing Bartholomew, Patriarch of Constantinople and head of the Orthodox Church, knelt on either side of Pope John Paul II before the newly opened door. Only one cushion had been provided as it was thought that only the Pope would kneel, but when they both fell to their knees, too, the Pope called out, "Unity! Thank you!" It was a highly symbolic moment.

The Pontiff had every reason to express his gratitude to the Churches represented and the two men flanking him. After all, in May 1999, the joint Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) had issued a statement "recognizing the Pope as the overall authority in the Christian World" and describing him as "a gift to be received by all Churches", (a gift yet to be accepted by the Synod of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion, however). Five months later in October, 1999, on Reformation Day, the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches had signed a joint declaration announcing that their opposing views on justification have been reconciled.³ With this declaration of reconciliation and unity, the way seems clear for the Lutherans to join the Anglicans in accepting Papal primacy. The frosty relationship of earlier years with the Russian Orthodox Church has warmed up and a Papal visit to Moscow and a meeting with Patriarch Alexy II is being discussed. Pentecostals and Charismatics have accelerated their Romeward journey and Evangelical leaders who have signed ECT ("Evangelicals and Catholics Together") have led very large numbers of Evangelicals to kneel before the open "holy" door that the Roman Catholic Church offers them.

The Pope's words that day were couched in the language associating equality with freedom. Carefully concealed in his response was the non-negotiable agenda of the Roman Catholic Church, for rather than looking for unity based on truth, the Papacy, as ever, is seeking to secure conformity through compromise. The "ecumenical dialogue" referred to by the Pope during the January 18th ceremony, is clearly governed by a special set of rules. Vatican Council II's post conciliar Document No. 42 on ecumenism states that "...dialogue is not an end in itself...it is not just an academic discussion."⁴ Rather,

"ecumenical dialogue...serves to transform modes of thought and behavior and the daily life of those [non-Catholic] communities. In this way, it **aims at preparing the way for their unity of faith in the bosom of a Church one and visible.**"⁽⁵⁾

That the papacy expects this process of dialogue to take time to accomplish its stated aim of bringing all Christian churches under its authority is clear when she says,

³ See Richard Bennett's analysis, "The Roman Catholic-Lutheran 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification': A Denial of the Gospel and the Righteousness of Christ."

⁴ Vatican Council II Documents Vol. II No. 42, "Reflections and Suggestions Concerning Ecumenical Dialogue," S.P.U.C., 15 August 1975, p.549. *Vatican Council II: More Post Conciliar Documents*, Austin P. Flannery, Ed. First Edition (Northport, NY: Costello Publ. Co., 1982)

⁽⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, pp. 540-1. Bolding in any quotation indicates emphasis added in this paper

“...little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesial communion are overcome, **all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist [the Mass] into that unity of the one and only Church...** This unity, we believe, dwells in the Catholic Church as something we can never lose.”⁶

The “little by little” approach of the Vatican II document are now giant steps.

How many present at the January 18th gathering understand what is really happening? The Pope’s official position is that “ecumenical encounter is not merely an individual work, but also a task of the [RC] Church, **which takes precedence over all individual opinions.**”⁽⁷⁾ Thus the opinions of others present on January 18th are “individual opinions” and worthless. The final goal of any dialogue with the RCC is, first and foremost, “unity” in a visible and specific ritual under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, “all Christians will be gathered, **in a common celebration of the Eucharist** into that unity of the one and only Church...unity we believe dwells in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose.” She could hardly state it more clearly.

Unity: True and False

Very different from this man-made spurious unity is the true unity of believers in Christ. The foundation of Christian unity is the position of believers “*in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.*”⁽⁸⁾ The Lord’s prayer in **John 17:21** for unity is answered in the life of an individual who is justified by God’s saving grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. The fact that the Lord Jesus Christ prayed for unity means that unity of believers is actual. God, the Father of His people, Who before the world existed chose the believers to be in Christ His Son, justified them through His righteousness, and upon saving them, places them in Him, and will preserve them in that unity unto the culmination of all things. Believers are placed into the unity which is in Christ Jesus, a unity which they themselves did not establish, but which they are commanded to maintain. In the words of the Apostle Paul, they are “*to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”⁽⁹⁾

True Ecumenism

The same Apostle shows clearly the ground of true unity: “*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*”⁽¹⁰⁾ Believers, therefore, who adhere to God only and His Written Word, as did the Lord and the Apostles after Him (‘Sola Scriptura’) are one in body, in Spirit, and in truth. They are saved before the all-Holy God by grace alone (‘Sola Gratia’), through faith alone (‘Sola Fide’), and in Christ alone (‘Solo Christo’) and all glory and praise is to God alone (‘Soli Deo Gloria’). These five biblical principles together show the foundation of true unity in the Lord. They have helped the persecuted church through the centuries to hold fast to the simplicity of the Gospel. True ecumenism is fellowship

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 541.

⁽⁷⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

⁽⁸⁾ 1 Thessalonians 1:1.

⁽⁹⁾ Ephesians 4:3.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Ephesians 4:4–6.

or working together in adherence to the five basic biblical principles that maintain the foundation of true unity in the Lord. To the degree to which these key basic biblical standards are embraced, true unity will be evident.

False Ecumenism

On the other hand, false ecumenism, typically institutionalized, is the joining together for common causes of professing Christian groups, when in fact one or more of the parties involved are unconverted. While purporting to confess the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures, for the most part the five biblical principles that display the basis of true unity in the Lord are compromised. The extent to which these principles are not upheld usually shows the inclination of the church or group to submit to Rome.

The World Council of Churches is such an institution. Within it, there is no agreement on any of the five principles that demonstrate the fact that the foundation of true unity is in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. The Pope and his Church, likewise in apostasy from the true Gospel, are also without any of the five biblical standards. Counterfeiting the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are intent on finding successful ways to bind all to the very visible, active and attractive pontifical throne.

Pope Defines Conformity

In his official letter, “That They May Be One”, the Pope defines full unity,

“The Catholic Church, both in her praxis and in her solemn documents, holds that the communion of the particular Churches with the Church of Rome, and of their Bishops with the Bishops of Rome is, in God’s plan, an essential requisite of full and visible communion.”¹¹

To arrive at that point of full unity, a different set of five principles must be adopted, principles that actually deny all five parameters of biblical truth. According to the Pope, “It is already possible to identify the areas in need of fuller study before a true consensus of faith can be achieved:

- (1) the relationship between Sacred Scripture, as the highest authority in matters of faith, and Sacred Tradition, as indispensable to the interpretation of the Word of God;
- (2) the Eucharist, as the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, an offering of praise to the Father, the sacrificial memorial and Real Presence of Christ and the sanctifying outpouring of the Holy Spirit;
- (3) Ordination, as a Sacrament, to the threefold Ministry of the episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate;
- (4) the Magisterium of the Church, entrusted to the Pope and the Bishops in communion with him, understood as a responsibility and an authority exercised in the name of Christ for teaching and safeguarding the faith;

¹¹ *Ut Unum Sint*, “That They May Be One: On Commitment to Ecumenism”, John Paul II (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference) Publ. No. 5–050, Para. 97.

(5) the Virgin Mary, as Mother of God and Icon of the Church, the spiritual Mother who intercedes for Christ's disciples and for all humanity."¹²

The Pope's objective in declaring his five principles is that a ubiquitous visible conformity to the Church of Rome should be forged in accordance with and manifested through her institution alone. Thus the Pope decrees,

"...it is now necessary to advance towards **the visible unity** which is required and sufficient and which is manifested in a real and concrete way, so that the Churches may truly become a sign of that full communion in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church **which will be expressed in the common celebration of the Eucharist.**"¹³

The RCC is attempting to forge a man-made unity, visible by means of an institution to which all must conform. Such a conception stands in direct contradiction to the reality of believers who, having been placed invisibly in Christ by God, are to maintain the bond of unity given them by the Holy Spirit.

External Unity to be Attained by Power and Penalty

What is this conformity now so passionately advocated by the Pope? How would it be applied in practice? From all previous experience, and the official teaching of the same Pope in his Canon Law, those fully participating will be obliged to submit their faculties of both mind and will to 'the Holy Father' [the Pope], to his decrees, and to the dogma of his Church. Thus present-day Roman law decrees, Canon 752,

"A religious respect of intellect and will, even if not the assent of faith, is to be paid to the teaching which the Supreme Pontiff or the college of bishops enunciate on faith or morals when they exercise the authentic magisterium even if they do not intend to proclaim it with a definitive act ..."

In this official law Rome enunciates, in clearer terms than any cult states, the necessity of suppressing one's God-given faculties, that of mind and will. This is not only demanded, the new Canon Law, the 'Papal Code' codified by the present Pope, includes a section entitled "Punishment of Offenses against Ecclesiastical Authorities and the Freedom of the Church". Under the heading, "The Punishment of Offenses in General", the Inquisition appears again as from old times, for Canon 1311 states,

"The Church has an innate and proper right to **coerce** offending members of the Christian faithful by means of penal sanctions."⁽¹⁴⁾

A brief acquaintance with history readily reveals that coercion is a term that the Roman Church understands very well. Naturally, when ushering all comers into her big tent, she makes light of its implications; but when once again in direct control of the levers of political power

¹² *Ibid.*, Para. 79.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Para. 78.

⁽¹⁴⁾ *Code of Canon Law*, Latin-English Edition (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983).

(which may well be provided by the fast advancing European super state), Canon 1311 could acquire that same notoriety as those that have so darkened the pages of history.

It is important to remember always that the Roman Papacy is an absolute monarchy and also a secular government. Enormously wealthy, it has territorial sovereignty, its court, nobles, and diplomatic corps; its detective force and secret service; its laws, advocates, and system of jurisprudence as well as prison; taxes, bank, foreign treaties and concordats, enormous political influence, ambitious plans and policies, all as much as any secular kingdom. And it still has the Inquisition, now styled the Office of the Doctrine of the Faith, headed by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger.

Bride of the Lamb understands Apostate Church

Believers of old were clear to call the Roman Catholic Church's imposed conformity "Satan's seat" or the Antichrist. This was known and spoken of even through the Middle Ages by Dante Alighieri (d. 1321), John Wycliff (d. 1384), John Huss (d. 1415), Savonarola (d. 1498), and William Tyndale (c. 1536). So Rome's conformity was described as Antichrist from the time of the Reformation by Martin Luther (d. 1546), Nicholas Ridley (d. 1554), John Bradford (d. 1555), and John Foxe (d. 1587), and in more recent times by Isaac Newton (d. 1727) and Jonathan Edwards (d. 1758). Now, as the "Holy" Roman Empire revives in the European Superstate, can believers afford to remain ignorant of both history and Biblical prophecy as understood throughout the centuries? Confident believers of old saw that unity is in Christ and, consequently, warned of the conformity with Rome. They both knew the true Church in Christ, and recognized the apostate church in Rome. Understanding that unity with the Roman Catholic Church always meant submission to her traditions and finally obedience to her Pope, they rejoiced that their unity was in the Beloved, rather than dallying with sin.

Pope Identified

Extravagantly, apparently without trembling, the Pope has again fulfilled the Lord's prophetic Word ([II Thessalonians 2:3–12](#)) depicting the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition. The sitting Pope purports to take for himself a Divine position. Thus in Section III of the prepared program for the "Day of Pardon," "The Holy Father" is mentioned eight times. Nonetheless in the RCC, this title does not denote the All Holy One in heaven, but rather the sitting Pope. Seen in the light of Scripture, the RCC Pope who claims to be Christian, clearly is one "*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*" (v. 4) The Pope of the RCC goes further when by taking to himself the title of "The Vicar of Christ," he presumes to take the place of Christ Himself, teacher, shepherd, and priest. This also is clearly tantamount to "*as God sit[ting] in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*" The assertion is not simply made, for the Pope's law gives it teeth in exacting submission of mind and will and promising punitive action against those who fail to obey, as Canon 752 and 1311 document. He is the worst and greatest enemy of Christ who under the pretence of service to Christ, presumes to undermine His unique offices by covertly usurping His position and power.

C. H. Spurgeon clearly understood these things. His timely words still apply:

"Since he was cursed who rebuilt Jerico, much more the man who labors to restore Popery among us. In our fathers' days the gigantic walls of Popery fell by the power of their faith, the

perseverance of their efforts, and the blast of their gospel trumpets; and now there are some who would rebuild that accursed system upon its old foundation. O Lord, be pleased to thwart their unrighteous endeavors, and pull down every stone, which they build. It should be a serious business with us to be thoroughly purged of every error which may have a tendency to foster the spirit of Popery; and when we have made a clean sweep at home we should seek in every way to oppose its all to rapid spread abroad in the church and in the world.⁽¹⁵⁾”

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How Many Protestant Denominations?

by Eric Svendsen

In the Fall of 1999 I posted a challenge on my web site to any Roman Catholic who could pin down the official Roman Catholic teaching about certain issues. The challenge was issued in response to the oft-argued line of reasoning that Protestantism is illegitimate by virtue of the differences in belief among 25,000 Protestant denominations—or, as Roman Catholic apologist Scott Hahn and others like to call it, the “anarchy” of Protestantism. The results of that challenge make up the contents of a forthcoming book by this author on the epistemological fallacies underlying the authority arguments of Roman Catholic apologists. While I cannot address that entire issue here, I shall address one important aspect that, I believe, demolishes a key brick in the “authority” arguments used by all Roman Catholic apologists.

When examining the common arguments for Roman Catholic authority it is a fairly straight forward process to point out to our Roman Catholic friends that their conclusions are questionable. What is more challenging is to discern when even their premises are wrong. Take the “25,000 Protestant denominations” argument as an example. The argument goes something like this: Sola Scriptura is a “blueprint for anarchy” as is witnessed in the 25,000 Protestant denominations in the world today. All of these denominations, it is argued, are guided by the same “Bible alone” principle, and as a result are hopelessly divided. In our answers to these Roman Catholic arguments we have all along simply assumed the soundness of the premise that in fact there are 25,000 Protestant denominations. In fact, the premise is quite unsound.

When this figure first surfaced among Roman Catholic apologists, it started at 20,000 Protestant denominations, grew to 23,000 Protestant denominations, then to 25,000 Protestant denominations, to the currently cited figure of 28,000 Protestant denominations. Indeed, many Roman Catholic apologists feel at liberty simply to calculate a daily rate of growth (based on their previous adherence to the original benchmark figure of 20,000) that they can then use as a

⁽¹⁵⁾ [Ephesians 4:3](#).

basis for projecting just how many Protestant denominations there were, or will be, in any given year. But just where do they arrive at this figure?

I have posed this question over and over again to many different Roman Catholic apologists, none of whom were able to verify the source with certainty. In most cases, one Roman Catholic apologist would claim he obtained the figure from another Roman Catholic apologist. When I would ask the latter Roman Catholic apologist about the figure, it was not uncommon for that apologist to point to the former apologist as his source for the figure, creating a circle with no actual beginning. I have long suspected that, whatever the source might be, the words “denomination” and “Protestant” were being defined in a way that most of us would reject.

I have only recently been able to locate the source of this figure. I say the source because in fact there is only one source that mentions this figure independently. All other secondary sources (to which Roman Catholics sometimes make appeal) ultimately cite the same original source. That source is David A. Barrett’s *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World A.D. 1900–2000* (ed. David A. Barrett; New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). This work is both comprehensive and painstakingly detailed; and its contents are quite enlightening. However, the reader who turns to this work for validation of the Roman Catholic 25,000-Protestant-denomination argument will be sadly disappointed. What follows is a synopsis of what Barrett’s work in this area really says. First, Barrett, writing in 1982, does indeed cite a figure of 20,780 denominations in 1980, and projects that there would be as many as 22,190 denominations by 1985. This represents an increase of approximately 270 new denominations each year (Barrett, 17). What the Roman Catholic who cites this figure does not tell us (most likely because he does not know) is that most of these denominations are non-Protestant.

Barrett identifies seven major ecclesiastical “blocs” under which these 22,190 distinct denominations fall (Barrett, 14–15): (1) Roman Catholicism, which accounts for 223 denominations; (2) Protestant, which accounts for 8,196 denominations; (3) Orthodox, which accounts for 580 denominations; (4) Non-White Indigenous, which accounts for 10,956 denominations; (5) Anglican, which accounts for 240 denominations; (6) Marginal Protestant, which includes Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, New Age groups, and all cults (Barrett, 14), and which accounts for 1,490 denominations; and (7) Catholic (Non-Roman), which accounts for 504 denominations. According to Barrett’s calculations, there are 8,196 denominations within Protestantism—not 25,000 as Roman Catholic apologists so cavalierly and carelessly claim. Barrett is also quick to point out that one cannot simply assume that this number will continue to grow each year; hence, the typical Roman Catholic projection of an annual increase in this number is simply not a given.

Yet even this figure is misleading; for it is clear that Barrett defines “distinct denominations” as any group that might have a slightly different emphasis than another group (such as the difference between a Baptist church that emphasizes hymns, and a another Baptist church that emphasizes praise music). No doubt the same Roman Catholic apologists who so gleefully cite the erroneous 25,000-denominations figure, and who might with just as much glee cite the revised 8,196-denominations figure, would reel at the notion that there might actually be 223 distinct denominations within Roman Catholicism! Yet that is precisely the number that Barrett cites for Roman Catholicism. Moreover, Barrett indicates in the case of Roman Catholicism that even this number can be broken down further to produce 2,942 separate “denominations”—and that was only in 1970! In that same year there were only 3,294 Protestant denominations; a difference of only 352 denominations. If we were to use the Roman Catholic apologist’s method

to “project” a figure for the current day, we could no doubt postulate a number upwards of 8,000 Roman Catholic denominations today! Hence, if Roman Catholic apologists want to argue that Protestantism is splintered into 8,196 “bickering” denominations, then they must just as readily admit that their own ecclesial system is splintered into at least 2,942 bickering denominations (possibly as many as 8,000). If, on the other hand, they would rather claim that among those 2,942+ (perhaps 8,000?) Roman Catholic denominations there is “unity,” then they can have no objection to the notion that among the 8,196 Protestant denominations there is also unity. In reality, Barrett indicates that what he means by “denomination” is any ecclesial body that retains a “jurisdiction” (i.e., semi-autonomy).

As an example, Baptist denominations comprise approximately 321 of the total Protestant figure. Yet the lion’s share of Baptist denominations are independent, making them (in Barrett’s calculation) separate denominations. In other words, if there are ten Independent Baptist churches in a given city, even though all of them are identical in belief and practice, each one is counted as a separate denomination due to its autonomy in jurisdiction. This same principle applies to all independent or semi-independent denominations. And even beyond this, all Independent Baptist denominations are counted separately from all other Baptist denominations, even though there might not be a dime’s worth of difference among them. The same principle is operative in Barrett’s count of Roman Catholic denominations. He cites 194 Latin-rite denominations in 1970, by which Barrett means separate jurisdictions (or diocese). Again, a distinction is made on the basis of jurisdiction, rather than differing beliefs and practices.

However Barrett has defined “denomination,” it is clear that he does not think of these as major distinctions; for that is something he reserves for another category. In addition to the seven major ecclesiastical “blocs” (mentioned above), Barrett breaks down each of these traditions into smaller units that might have significant differences (what he calls “major ecclesiastical traditions,” and what we might normally call a true denomination) (Barrett, 14). Referring again to our seven major ecclesiastical “blocs” (mentioned above, but this time in reverse order): For (1) Catholic (Non-Roman), there are four traditions, including Catholic Apostolic, Reformed Catholic, Old Catholic, and Conservative Catholic; for (2) Marginal Protestants, there are six traditions; for (3) Anglican, there are six traditions; for (4) Non-White Indigenous, which encompasses third-world peoples (among whom can be found traces of Christianity mixed with the major tenets of their indigenous pagan religions), there are twenty traditions, including a branch of Reformed Catholic and a branch of Conservative Catholic; for (5) Orthodox, there are nineteen traditions; for (6) Protestant, there are twenty-one traditions; and for (7) Roman Catholic, there are sixteen traditions, including Latin-rite local, Latin-rite catholic, Latin/Eastern-rite local, Latin/Eastern-rite catholic, Syro-Malabarese, Ukrainian, Romanian, Maronite, Melkite, Chaldean, Ruthenian, Hungarian, plural Oriental rites, Syro-Malankarese, Slovak, and Coptic. It is important to note here that Barrett places these sixteen Roman Catholic traditions (i.e., true denominations) on the very same level as the twenty-one Protestant traditions (i.e., true denominations). In other words, the true count of real denominations within Protestantism is twenty-one, whereas the true count of real denominations within Roman Catholic is sixteen. Combined with the other major ecclesiastical blocs, that puts the total number of actual denominations in the world at ninety-two—obviously nowhere near the 23,000 or 25,000 figure that Roman Catholic apologists constantly assert—and that figure of ninety-two denominations includes the sixteen denominations of Roman Catholicism (Barrett, 15)! Barrett goes on to note that this figure includes all denominations with a membership of over 100,000. There are an

additional sixty-four denominations worldwide, distributed among the seven major ecclesiastical blocs.

As we have shown, the larger figures mentioned earlier (8,196 Protestant denominations and perhaps as many as 8,000 Roman Catholic denominations) are based on jurisdiction rather than differing beliefs and practice. Obviously, neither of those figures represents a true denominational distinction. Hence, Barrett's broader category (which we have labeled true denominations) of twenty-one Protestant denominations and sixteen Roman Catholic denominations represents a much more realistic calculation.

Moreover, Barrett later compares Roman Catholicism to Evangelicalism, which is a considerably smaller subset of Protestantism (so far as the number of denominations is concerned), and which is really the true category for those who hold to *sola Scriptura* (most Protestant denominations today, being liberal denominations and thereby dismissing the authority of the Bible, do not hold to *sola Scriptura*, except perhaps as a formality). Any comparison that the Roman Catholic apologist would like to make between *sola Scriptura* as the guiding principle of authority, and Rome as the guiding principle of authority (which we have demonstrated earlier is a false comparison in any case), needs to compare true *sola Scriptura* churches (i.e., Evangelicals) to Rome, rather than all Protestant churches to Rome. An Evangelical, as defined by Barrett, is someone who is characterized by (1) a personal conversion experience, (2) a reliance upon the Bible as the sole basis for faith and living, (3) an emphasis on evangelism, and (4) a conservative theology (Barrett, 71). Interestingly, when discussing Evangelicals Barrett provides no breakdown, but rather treats them as one homogeneous group. However, when he addresses Roman Catholics on the very same page, he breaks them down into four major groups: (1) Catholic Pentecostals (Roman Catholics involved in the organized Catholic Charismatic Renewal); (2) Christo-Pagans (Latin American Roman Catholics who combine folk-Catholicism with traditional Amerindian paganism); (3) Evangelical Catholics (Roman Catholics who also regard themselves as Evangelicals); and (4) Spiritist Catholics (Roman Catholics who are active in organized high or low spiritism, including syncretistic spirit-possession cults). And of course, we all know that this list can be supplemented by distinctions between moderate Roman Catholics (represented by almost all Roman Catholic scholars), Conservative Roman Catholics (represented by Scott Hahn and most Roman Catholic apologists), Traditionalist Roman Catholics (represented by apologist Gerry Matatics), and Sedevacantist Roman Catholics (those who believe the chair of Peter is currently vacant).

In any case, once we inquire into the source of the infamous 25,000-Protestant-denomination figure, one point becomes crystal clear: Whenever and at whatever point Barrett compares true denominations and differences among either Protestants or Evangelicals to those of Roman Catholicism, Roman Catholicism emerges almost as splintered as Protestantism, and even more splintered than Evangelicalism. That levels the playing field significantly. Whatever charge of "doctrinal chaos" Roman Catholic apologists wish to level against Protestantism may be leveled with equal force—and perhaps even greater force—against the doctrinal chaos of Roman Catholicism. Obviously, the Roman Catholic apologist can take little comfort in the fact that he has only sixteen denominations while Protestantism has twenty-one; and he can take even less comfort in the fact that while Evangelicalism has no divisional breakdown, Roman Catholicism has at least four major divisions. If the Roman Catholic apologist wants instead to cite 8,196 idiosyncrasies within Protestantism, then he must be willing to compare that figure to at least 2,942 (perhaps upwards of 8,000 these days) idiosyncrasies within Roman Catholicism. In any case, he cannot compare the one ecclesial tradition of Roman Catholicism to 25,000, 8,196, or

even twenty-one Protestant denominations; for Barrett places Roman Catholicism (as a single ecclesial tradition) on the same level as Protestantism (as a single ecclesial tradition).

In short, Roman Catholic apologists have hurriedly, carelessly and, as a result, irresponsibly glanced at Barrett's work, found a large number (22, 189), and arrived at all sorts of absurdities that Barrett never concluded. One can only hope that, upon reading this critique, Roman Catholic apologists will finally put this argument to bed. The more likely scenario, however, is that the death of this argument will come about only when Evangelicals consistently point out this error—and correct it—each time it is raised by a Roman Catholic apologist.

Eric Svendsen, M.A., D.T.S., Ph.D. (cand.)

Queen of All

By Jim Tetlow

Ecstasy!

She appears as a living, breathing, three-dimensional lady enveloped in exquisite light. Visionaries and seers describe a beautiful, young woman glowing in radiant splendor. Seers, while describing her as brilliant to behold and arrayed with every splendor, admit that the “Queen of Heaven” transcends human description.

Visionaries also report seeing strange lights and glorious visions that often accompany an apparition. Visions of angels, glowing orbs, tongues of fire, mysterious solar phenomena, and peculiar luminous clouds have been sighted. Because of the tremendous pleasure and joy experienced by seers during an apparition, the term *ecstasy*¹ is the word most often used to describe this event. Those who have witnessed her, admit that they are paralyzed and enraptured by her beauty and charm.

Numerous healings and miracles have been reported at apparition sites around the globe. In addition, the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary has repeatedly announced that the most significant signs and wonders are yet future! She admits that she has not yet revealed her full glory to the world. She predicts heavenly signs and events that the whole world will witness in the very near future.

My sign is emerging, God wills it thus. Only my children recognize it, as it reveals itself in secrecy, and they praise the Eternal One for it. Today I cannot reveal my power to the whole world. I must withdraw with my children. In secrecy I will perform miracles on the souls until the number of sacrifices has become full. ... Then I can reveal myself to the whole world...²

Soon, I will come, my children! Soon, I will be in your midst with a great light. I will enlighten the entire world. Many souls will cry because they did not listen to my call....

¹ *Ecstasy comes from the Greek word EKSTASIS, meaning trance. In the Book of Acts, both Peter and Paul fell into a trance (Gr. EKSTASIS) during a vision from God (Refer to Acts 10:10; 22:17).*

² Thomas Petrisko, *Call of the Ages*, Santa Barbara, CA, Queenship Publishing, 1995, p. 303. Message from “Mary” to Barbara Ruess, Marienfried, Germany, June 25, 1946.

I will pass above everyone in a cloud and everyone will see me. What will become of those who insulted me and made a laughing stock of me?...

I will come soon, my sons, to travel through the entire world. I will give a great sign in the sky for those who will still want to be saved. All those who have recourse to me, who have a look of repentance, this will be sufficient to save them.³

The Numbers are Staggering

Consider that 15 to 20 million Marian followers visit a single shrine in Guadalupe, Mexico, every single year! The shrine is dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, who appeared in 1531 to seer Juan Diego. On December 12th 1999, the anniversary of the Virgin Mary's appearance, 5 million pilgrims visited the shrine to pay honor to Our Lady.⁴ In addition, 1999 marks the first time in church history that the feast of the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe is being celebrated by all bishops and priests in the Western Hemisphere. In an apostolic exhortation delivered during his visit to Mexico in January, Pope John Paul II elevated December 12 to a holy day for the Catholic Church.⁵

In war-torn Bosnia, an estimated 30 million pilgrims have visited Medjugorje since the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary began in 1981.⁶ Besides the six visionaries who regularly receive messages from the Virgin, thousands of pilgrims claim to see signs and wonders; experience healing; and hear the voice of Mary at Medjugorje. Visiting Medjugorje is a painstaking task involving many hours by bus over war-torn roads. The millions of pilgrims who venture to Medjugorje do so with the knowledge that their pilgrimage will be difficult and dangerous - yet they continue to come in droves.

In Conyers, Georgia, seer Nancy Fowler has received up to 100,000 visitors to her farm on a single day.⁷ The pilgrims come from all over, many traveling great distances to hear the most recent message from the Blessed Mother. At the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, in Emmitsburg, Maryland, attendance has increased to 500,000 per year.⁸

Marian Apparitions Everywhere

Marian apparitions from almost every state in America are being reported, and many of these sites are drawing thousands. From New York City to San Francisco numerous reported

³ Timothy Green Beckley & Art Crockett, *Secret Prophecy of Fatima Revealed*, New Brunswick, NJ, Inner Light Publications, 1991, pp. 106, 107. Message from "Mary" to Italian visionary Rosa Quattrini. Compare this Marian message with [Zechariah 5](#), where we are told of a woman, whom God refers to as "Wickedness," who goes forth throughout the entire earth.

⁴ "5 Million Pilgrims Visit Virgin's Shrine," *Orange County Register*, Dec. 13, 1999, p. 20.

⁵ Margaret Rameriz, "Huge Throng Hails Virgin of Guadalupe," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 12, 1999, p. B13.

⁶ Wayne Weible, *The Final Harvest*, Brewster, MA, Paraclette Press, 1999, p. xiv.

⁷ "Virgin Mary's Messenger Draws Huge Crowd for Final Sermon," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 14, 1998, p. A16.

⁸ Petrisko, p. xxix.

visitations from the Queen of Heaven have been documented.⁹ The sheer number of Marian followers and their determination to hear from the Virgin reveals that these individuals are not merely curious sightseers, but rather a huge, growing flock of Marian disciples.

Five and one-half million pilgrims visit a single apparition site in Lourdes, France annually.¹⁰ Poland's Marian shrine Our Lady of Czestochowa (a favorite of Pope John Paul II) draws an estimated five million pilgrims a year.¹¹ A single apparition site in Knock, Ireland, has drawn millions who come to pray to Our Lady of Knock and visit the Apparition Gable. This Marian shrine in Ireland has been honored by four popes this century, including Pope John Paul II, who went on pilgrimage to Knock in 1979.¹²

In Sabana Grande, Puerto Rico, a location where the Virgin Mary reportedly appeared more than 40 years ago, multiplied thousands of religious devotees come from all over the world. The site has become so popular that preparations are underway to construct a statue of the Virgin twice as high as New York's Statue of Liberty. A local newspaper reports that:

The grand scale heroic statue of Our Lady of the Rosary, part of the projected 500-acre Mystical City complex, will top at 1,500 feet. It will have room inside to contain radio and TV stations, various chapels, apartments, a food court, conference rooms and an observation deck.¹³

At the famous apparition site in Fatima, Portugal, pilgrims numbering more than 1 million are in attendance during the October 13th anniversary of the 1917 apparition. Total annual attendance at Fatima is estimated to be 4.5 million, and growing.¹⁴ The list of major apparition sites goes on and on.

On May 31st, 1999, thousands gathered in Amsterdam to celebrate the 3rd International Day of Prayer of the Lady of All Nations. Dozens of priests, bishops and cardinals presided over the event, where thousands of participants from over 70 countries and 6 continents converged to honor the Lady of All Nations.¹⁵ This apparition of the Virgin Mary appeared to visionary Ida Peerdeman numerous times. Her main message was that she wants the Church and pope to

⁹ Mark Garvey, *Searching for Mary: An Exploration of Marian Apparitions Across the U.S.*, New York, The Penguin Group, 1998, p. 25.

¹⁰ Charles Dickson, *A Protestant Pastor Looks at Mary*, Huntington, Indiana, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing division, 1996, p. 103.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104. Also known as Our Lady of Jasna Gora.

¹² *Knock: The Apparition Gable From 1879 To the Present*, Cashin Printing Services, pp. 3, 19.

¹³ Steve Beauclair, "Skyscraper statue slated for Sabana Grande; \$42 million Virgin Mary part of Mystical City," *Caribbean Business*, Feb. 26, 1998, Late News cover story. Note: The 305 foot high statue will be set on a 1,200 foot base, giving a structure whose total height is 1,500 feet.

¹⁴ Dickson, pp.103, 104.

¹⁵ *3rd International Day of Prayer of The Lady of All Nations*, Amsterdam, May 31, 1999, The Family of Mary Coredeptrix, Videocassette, 1999.

officially proclaim the Lady of All Nations as Co-Redemptrix.¹⁶ To date, millions of faithful Marian advocates have petitioned the pope to officially name her Co-Redemptrix.¹⁷

Growing Worldwide Popularity

The popularity of the Virgin and her messages has grown to mammoth proportions. Marian historians are quick to point out that apparitions of Mary have been recorded throughout the centuries, but never in the history of Marian apparitions has she appeared with such consistency and frequency as in our day.

In 1997, *Newsweek* ran a cover story on the Virgin Mary. In the article they write: “In many ways, the 20th century has belonged to Mary. From almost every continent, visionaries have reported more than 400 ‘apparitions’ of the Virgin—more than in the previous three centuries combined.... Taken together, these visions point to what the Marian Movement believes is a millennial ‘Age of Mary.’”¹⁸

We might expect this phenomenon to occur in countries that are predominately Catholic, but apparitions are being reported from Japan to Africa, from Korea to Australia, from Iraq to Israel, from Egypt to Syria. Whether looking deep within the former Soviet Union or among the peoples of India, one thing is found in common - they are all allegedly being visited by a woman who calls herself Mary, the Queen of Heaven, Our Lady. Father Robert Faricy, quoted in the book *Queen of the Cosmos*, states:

Never in the history of Christianity has the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to so many people over so long a period of time with such regularity. Moreover, it seems that the apparitions at Medjugorje have ushered in a new Marian age. There are reports of her appearing everywhere.¹⁹

In his book *Call of the Ages*, author Thomas W. Petrisko writes: “Millions and millions on all continents of the globe have heard and responded to the Virgin Mary’s apparitions and messages. Indeed, there is a significant upswing in attendance at Marian shrines everywhere.”²⁰

The Rev. Charles Dickson, Ph.D., a Lutheran minister, reported this trend in *Queen Magazine*: “people around the world are traveling enormous distances to demonstrate in person their veneration of the Mother of Our Lord.”²¹ He goes on to state that France alone has 937 pilgrimage shrines and that at the most popular Marian shrine in France, attendance has increased 10 percent in two years. And while devotion to Mary is most noticeable in Catholic countries, Marian devotion is attracting an enormous following from every religion, race and nation.

All My Children

¹⁶ Josef Kunzli, editor, *The Messages of The Lady of All Nations*, Santa Barbara, CA, Queenship Publishing, 1996, p. 85.

¹⁷ *3rd International Day of Prayer of The Lady of All Nations*.

¹⁸ Kenneth L. Woodward, “Hail, Mary,” *Newsweek*, Aug. 25, 1997, p. 50.

¹⁹ Jan Connell, *Queen of the Cosmos*, Brewster, MA, Paraclete Press, 1990, p. 4.

²⁰ Petrisko, p. xxix.

²¹ Rev. Charles Dickson, Ph.D., *Queen Magazine*, March-April 1994.

A consistent message given by the hundreds, and possibly thousands, of apparitions currently appearing worldwide is one of peace, unity, and tolerance. At Medjugorje, the apparition of Mary has stated:

Dear children, today I invite you to peace. I have come here as the Queen of Peace and I desire to enrich you with my Motherly Peace.... I invite you to become carriers and witnesses of my peace to this unpeaceful world. Let peace rule in the whole world.²²

In another message, Mary told the seers: “Tell this priest, tell everyone, that it is you who are divided on earth. **The Muslims and the Orthodox, for the same reason as Catholics, are equal before my Son and I. You are all my children.**”²³ Mary’s message of peace and unity is one that a distressed and perplexed world craves.

Her reported messages in Betania, Venezuela typify her words of hope given around the world: “My children, I am giving you a piece of Heaven.... Betania, Venezuela. **It is for everyone, not only Catholics....** My message is of faith, love, and hope. More than anything, it brings reconciliation between people and nations. It is the only thing that can save this century from war and eternal death.”²⁴

Charles Dickson, author of *A Protestant Pastor Looks at Mary*, writes:

A Muslim student visiting Rome wants especially to see the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Surprised? The poetry of a Syrian mystic is replete with Marian devotion. Surprised? Martin Luther recommended prayer to Mary. Surprised? An American Pentecostalist minister begins to visit shrines of Marian apparitions. Surprised? Muslims refer to Mary as il-Sittneh, or Our Lady. Surprised? A chapter in the Koran is named after her. Surprised? Mary’s deep kindness as a mother is portrayed in Chinese art. Surprised? And now a presbyterian minister has written a book recommending praying the rosary. Still surprised? ... a closer investigation of both past history and current events points out that **Mary has a universal appeal that transcends our cultural, geographical, and even religious boundaries.**²⁵

“Mary” Promises Unity

Almost all of the apparitions have stated that Mary is going to usher in a new era of peace and unity. Under her mantle all people will gather in peace and solve the problems facing the world. Her emphasis on unity and ecumenism has garnered attention from the media. *The Los Angeles Times* reported in their December 25, 1998 issue in an article entitled “Mary’s Rising Popularity Goes Beyond Faith” that:

A growing number of Americans from all Christian denominations are reaching out to the Virgin Mary as a comforting conduit of spirituality and a symbol of peace in troubled

²² “Message given July 25, 1990,” Online posting, <http://www.medjugorje.org/msg90.htm>, May 1, 2000.

²³ Richard J. Beyer, *Medjugorje Day By Day*, Notre Dame, IN., Ave Maria Press, 1993, April 6th meditation.

²⁴ “Betania - I come to reconcile them,” Online posting, <http://members.aol.com/bjw1106/marian9.htm>, Aug. 28, 1998.

²⁵ Dickson, p. 60.

times. ... Reported sightings of Mary have steadily increased across the globe in recent years.... **Her maternal gaze seems to have an ecumenical appeal.** ... It's not just Roman Catholics who are interested in Mary and following the apparitions. ... Each day, thousands of people bring their troubles to the sites where the Virgin is claimed to have appeared.²⁶

One of the best witnessed series of apparitions occurred at a Coptic Orthodox church in Zeitoun, Egypt, a suburb of Cairo. People from many countries and of varied religious backgrounds witnessed the apparitions from 1968 to 1973. It is estimated that the total number of witnesses numbered in the millions! Moslems, Copts, Roman Catholics, Protestants, and others were overwhelmed by the Lady who seemed to be composed of light. Moslems chanted from the Koran: "Mary, God has chosen thee. And purified thee; He has chosen thee above all women." At Zeitoun, as well as countless other sites around the globe, the phenomenon attracts people from every conceivable background and the message seems to clearly be one of unity and ecumenism.

The Queen's Appeal

In 1996, *Life Magazine* featured Mary on the cover and asked these questions: "Why are two billion Hail Marys said daily? Why did five million people, many non-Christian, visit Lourdes this year to drink the healing waters? Why did more than 10 million trek to Guadalupe to pray to Our Lady? ... Why the apparitions? Why are Mary hymns creeping into Methodist songbooks? ... What is it about Mary?"²⁷ The *Life* article goes on to list numerous apparitions and to quote various statistics. For instance, *Life* notes that "In Italy, 50 weeping Madonna statues have been reported in the past two years."

Life Magazine notes that Mary's popularity is not just among Catholics: "One of the intriguing aspects of the latest rise of Mary is this: The emotional need for her is so irresistible to a troubled world that people without an obvious link to the Virgin are being drawn to her. It's not news that Muslims revere Mary as a pure and holy saint-she's mentioned 34 times in the Koran,...but to see large numbers of Muslims making pilgrimages to Christian Marian shrines is a remarkable thing. Interdenominational Marian prayer groups are springing up throughout the world."²⁸

Why does she appeal to so many? Is it possible that many are drawn by the numerous reported miracles, signs, and wonders? In a world that seeks interaction with the supernatural, it is no surprise that many flock to the miraculous. These miracles, if true, would rival the miracles performed in Moses' day. Consider that at several apparition sites, a phenomenon known as "the Miracle of the Sun" has been seen by hundreds of thousands.

Miracle of the Sun

At Fatima, on October 13, 1917, there were 70,000 people who witnessed the sun apparently fall from the sky. These eyewitnesses claim that they watched as the sun fell from heaven toward

²⁶ Elaine Gale, "Mary's Rising Popularity Goes Beyond Faith," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 25, 1998, p. A41.

²⁷ Robert Sullivan, "The Mystery of Mary," *Life Magazine*, Dec., 1996, p. 45.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 58, 60.

the crowd and then return to its normal position in the sky. Many thought this was signaling the end of the world and were sure they would perish. Here is a brief recount of the events at Fatima:

Just when it seemed that the ball of fire would fall upon and destroy them, the miracle ceased and the sun resumed its normal place in the sky, shining forth as peacefully as ever. When the people arose from the ground, cries of astonishment were heard on all sides. Their clothes, which had been soaking wet and muddy, now were clean and dry. Many of the sick and crippled had been cured of their afflictions.²⁹

The Miracle of the Sun is a common, albeit fantastic, event at many apparition sites. It happened before a crowd of 100,000 in Puerto Rico on April 23, 1991, which was the 38th anniversary of the apparitions there,³⁰ and it happened again in the Philippines on March 5, 1993, in front of a crowd of 300,000.³¹ Similar events have been recorded at such apparition sites as Medjugorje, Bosnia; Denver, Colorado; Lubbock, Texas; and Conyers, Georgia.

The Miracle of the Sun is one of many supernatural phenomena reported at apparition sites around the globe. Here is an abridged summary of the miracles reported at just one apparition site:

The appearances of the Mother of God in Medjugorje have been accompanied by a number of miracles, including physical healings (now numbered at 360), reports of the sun dancing or spinning in the sky, rosary links and medals that apparently change from silver to gold, and other phenomenon.... Just as Christ worked miracles during his earthly life to authenticate his teaching and ministry, so Our Lady of Medjugorje seems to be using them to validate her presence and messages, which, as always, direct us to her Son.³²

When Mary Speaks, Rome Listens

These apparitions and the supernatural phenomena associated with them, have not gone unnoticed by high level Church officials. In 1984 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the head of the Roman Catholic Church's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), declared that, "one of the signs of our times is that the announcements of 'Marian Apparitions' are multiplying all over the world."³³

Even the current pope has stated, "If I wasn't a Pope, I'd be in Medjugorje already."³⁴ The pope has visited numerous Marian shrines and apparition sites and his Marian devotion is truly

²⁹ *Our Lady of Fatima's Peace Plan From Heaven*, Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1983, pp. 7, 8.

³⁰ Thomas W. Petrisko, editor, "Our Lady of the Rosary in Puerto Rico," *Our Lady Queen of Peace*, McKees Rock, PA, Pittsburgh Center for Peace, Special Edition 1, 2nd Printing, Winter 1992, p. 13.

³¹ "Filipinos flock to glimpse vision of Mary," *The Tennessean*, Volume 89, Number 66, Mar. 7, 1993, p. 2A.

³² Beyer.

³³ "Prologue...a Context for Marian Apparitions and Eucharistic Miracles - Prologue," Online posting, <http://members.aol.com/bjw1106/marian1b.htm>, Jan. 26, 2000.

³⁴ Joan Ashton, *The Peoples Madonna*, London, Harper-Collins Publishers, 1991, p. 216.

remarkable. In his book, *Crossing The Threshold of Hope*, the pope writes: “I think what I have said sufficiently explains the Marian devotion of the present Pope and, above all, his attitude of total abandonment to Mary-his Totus Tuus.”³⁵

Pope John Paul II believes that if victory comes to the Universal Church it will be brought by Mary. In his book, *Crossing The Threshold of Hope*, he makes this unexpected statement:

After my election as Pope, as I became more involved in the problems of the universal Church, I came to have a similar conviction: **On this universal level, if victory comes it will be brought by Mary.** Christ will conquer through her, because he wants the Church’s victories now and in the future to be linked to her.

I held this conviction even though I did not yet know very much about Fatima. I could see, however, that there was a certain continuity among La Salette, Lourdes, and Fatima—and, in distant past, our Polish Jasna Gora.

And thus we come to May 13, 1981, when I was wounded by gunshots fired in St. Peter’s Square. At first, I did not pay attention to the fact that the assassination attempt had occurred on the exact anniversary of the day Mary appeared to the three children at Fatima in Portugal and spoke to them the words that now, at the end of this century, seem to be close to their fulfillment.³⁶

The pope credits the apparition of Our Lady of Fatima with saving his life during the 1981 assassination attempt.³⁷ Shortly after the assassination attempt, Pope John Paul II, consecrated the entire world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.³⁸ The pope’s consecration was done in response to the request made by Our Lady of Fatima.

Furthermore, in October, 2000, the pope ordered the miraculous statue of Our Lady of Fatima to the Vatican for the Great Jubilee. On Sunday October 8th, Pope John Paul with 1500 bishops-the largest group to assemble since Vatican II - entrusted humanity and the 3rd millennium to Our Lady of Fatima!³⁹

Global Network - Global Power

With the exponential growth in apparitions around the world, the number of Marian groups and conferences are mushrooming. One group alone, the Blue Army, boasts over 20 million members.⁴⁰ Another group known as the Marian Movement of Priests is supported by at least 400 cardinals and bishops, and more than 100,000 priests, and millions of religious and faithful

³⁵ Pope John Paul II, Vittorio Messori, editor, *Crossing The Threshold of Hope*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Borzoi Book, 1994, p. 215.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 220, 221.

³⁷ Tad Szulc, *Pope John Paul II: The Biography*, New York, Pocket Books, 1995, pp. 22–24.

³⁸ Petrisko, *Call of the Ages*, p. 5. The pope consecrated the entire world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1982 and 1984.

³⁹ “Vatican Dossier - John Paul II Entrusts Third Millennium To Mary,” Online posting, <http://www.Zenit.org>, June 6, 2001. Go to Archives and click on October 8, 2000.

⁴⁰ Thomas W. Petrisko, *The Last Crusade*, McKees Rock, PA, St. Andrews Productions, 1996, p. 70.

around the world.⁴¹ The statistics are more than impressive, they may represent the greatest spiritual movement in centuries.

With conversion as her goal, the apparition of Mary claims to be appearing around the world. Father Stefano Gobbi, the head of the Marian Movement of Priests, often receives messages from Mary confirming her global manifestations: “With extraordinary signs which I am giving in every part of the world, through my messages and through my so frequent apparitions, I am pointing out to everyone the approaching of the great day of the Lord.”⁴²

Wherever she appears, the Queen of Heaven makes it clear that she has come for ALL her children, not just Catholics. Protestants, Muslims, and individuals from other religious affiliations often go to apparition sites skeptical, only to find that they too have been touched by Mary. Many non-Catholics have actually converted to the Roman Catholic faith after an apparition experience. As Medjugorje visionary Ivan Dragicevic has conveyed, Mary has come for all of us.

It is very important to emphasize that the Blessed Mother came for all of us. Mary’s messages refer to the whole world. Her messages throughout have been that we must pray for all religions, because we know that we have divided ourselves by religion.⁴³

Concerning the growing number of apparitions worldwide, noted Marian author Michael Brown wrote: “[During the second half of the 20th century Marian apparitions] grew to remarkable proportion ... if every daily or weekly apparition is counted in cases where a seer had more than one, the number would not be calculable.... **the French periodical Le Monde once estimated twenty-one thousand apparitions between 1976 and 1986!**”⁴⁴

Twenty-one thousand apparitions! If true, that would constitute the greatest display of paranormal activity in the history of the world. With hundreds of millions of followers and thousands of alleged apparitions taking place in our generation, could heaven be sending us a wake-up call?

Testing the Spirits

Those who are familiar with the Word of God know that we are to be cautious when dealing with alleged heavenly visitors. The Apostle John reminds us: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1). Furthermore, the New Testament repeatedly warns of deception, in the name of Christ, in the last days.

For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect (Matthew 24:24).

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1).

⁴¹ “The Marian Movement of Priests,” Online posting, <http://www.mmp-usa.net/>, May 15, 2000.

⁴² Fr. Don Stefano Gobbi, *To the Priests, Our Lady’s Beloved Sons*, St. Francis, ME, The National Headquarters of the Marian Movement of Priests in the United States of America, 1998, p. 419.

Message given in Como, Italy, on December 31, 1984 to Father Gobbi.

⁴³ Wayne Weible, *Medjugorje The Message*, Brewster, MA, Paraclette Press, 1989, p. 344. Quote from seer Ivan Dragicevic.

⁴⁴ Michael H. Brown, *The Last Secret*, Ann Arbor, MI, Servant Publications, 1998, p. 281.

The principal way to test these reported “Messengers From Heaven” is to test their messages with the Bible. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

Messages From Heaven

We will examine a few messages from apparitions which have received full Church approval. The following Marian messages derive from apparition sites which have received the Catholic Church’s approval and endorsement. Each quote from the Queen of Heaven is preceded with a **. Her message is followed by, and contrasted with, the Word of God.

** I alone am able still to save you from the calamities which approach. Those who place their confidence in me will be saved.⁴⁵

I, even I, am the Lord, and besides Me there is no savior (Isaiah 43:11).

** I boldly assert that His suffering became my suffering, because His heart was mine. And just as Adam and Eve sold the world for an apple, so in a certain sense my Son and I redeemed the world with one heart...⁴⁶

As for our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, the Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 47:4).

** [Jesus] wishes to establish in the world devotion to My Immaculate Heart... [Lucia recalled,] Before the palm of the right hand of Our Lady was a heart encircled by thorns which seemed to have pierced it like nails. We understood that it was the Immaculate Heart of Mary outraged by the sins of humanity, for which there must be reparation.⁴⁷

But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. ... there is no longer an offering for sin (Hebrews 10:12–14, 18).

Effective Deception

The Marian apparitions clearly contradict the teachings of Scripture. The apparitions’ thousands of messages portray a Queen who possesses all of Christ’s distinct characteristics. She is said to be our Mediator, our Intercessory, our Advocate, our Coredeemer, our Suffering Servant, and many other titles that reveal her deceptive agenda.

⁴⁵ Teiji Yasuda, O.S.V., English version by John M. Haffert, *Akita: The Tears and Message of Mary*, Asbury, NJ, 101 Foundation, Inc., 1989, p. 78. Message from Our Lady of Akita to Sister Agnes Sasagawa.

⁴⁶ Thomas Petrisko, *Call of the Ages*, Santa Barbara, CA, 1995, p. 247. Message from Mary to St. Bridget of Sweden, 14th century.

⁴⁷ Walsh, *Our Lady of Fatima*, New York, Doubleday, pp. 68–9. Message from Our Lady of Fatima to Lucia.

Some proponents of the Marian apparitions might protest this line of reasoning. Is it fair to focus only on those messages that contradict Scripture? Shouldn't we applaud the apparition of Mary for the good, biblical messages she has sent? Shouldn't we focus on the transformed lives and the good fruit?

To answer that question, let's consider how Satan has tempted in the past. When tempting Jesus, Satan accurately quoted Scripture.⁴⁸ Satan knew that he couldn't deceive Jesus with an outright lie, but that he must use subtle deception. Likewise, Satan often mixes a subtle lie in with truth. He is the master of deception. Not many within the church would worship or follow him if he were to appear wearing a red suit and carrying a pitchfork. No, the grandest of all deceptions are those that are mostly true.

While the bulk of the apparitions' messages seem harmless, even biblical, is it possible that subtle deception mixed with truth might lead many down a pathway that leads to eternal destruction? Satan may encourage good and noble deeds as long as they ultimately compromise our relationship with Jesus and His Word. The Bible states emphatically that God will not share His glory with another: "I am the Lord, that is My name; and **My glory I will not give to another**, nor My praise to carved images." (Isaiah 42:8).

The Queen's Agenda

As history comes to a close, the Queen of Heaven, who is counterfeiting the Mary of the Bible, has a specific agenda.

She has made several remarkable predictions, but perhaps none so controversial as her proclamation that the Roman Catholic Church will declare her Co-Redemptrix. The Lady of All Nations, as she is called by the faithful, made this remarkable prediction to visionary Ida Peerdeman:

Once more I am here. - The Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate is now standing before you. I have chosen this day: on this day the Lady will be crowned. Theologians and apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, listen carefully: I have given you the explanation of the dogma. Work and ask for this dogma. You should petition the Holy Father for this dogma... On this date "the Lady of All Nations" will receive Her official title of "Lady of All Nations."⁴⁹

Pope John Paul II Refers to Mary as "Co-Redemptrix"

Additionally, the present pontiff, Pope John Paul II has applied the title "Co-Redemptrix" to the Blessed Virgin Mary on at least five occasions, including papal teachings accompanied by profound theological treatments on the unique participation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the

⁴⁸ Matthew 4:6

⁴⁹ Kunzli, p. 83. Message given on May 31, 1954, the Feast of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces.

redemption of humanity by Jesus Christ.⁵⁰ It is rumored that the pope may announce Mary as “Co-Redemptrix” very soon.⁵¹

According to many Marian theologians, the Co-Redemptrix doctrine will be the last and final Marian dogma, and it will usher in her triumphant reign promised at Fatima. Authors Ted and Maureen Flynn explain what they and many other Marian theologians believe will soon take place.

The last major event will be the proclamation of the Blessed Mother as Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate - the last and final Marian dogma of the Catholic Church.⁵²

Dogma, then Peace

As we have briefly highlighted, the Queen has promised to bring peace and unity to all her children. This will not occur, however, until she is proclaimed the Coredemptrix.

****When the dogma, the last dogma in Marian history, has been proclaimed, “the Lady of All Nations” will give peace, true peace to the world. The nations, however, must say My prayer in union with the Church. They must know that “the Lady of All Nations” has come as Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate. So be it!**⁵³

Once she is proclaimed Co-Redemptrix by the Pope, the Queen will unite all religions under her mantle.

Queen Over All

Marian advocates often quote Saint Louis de Montfort, who was a great devotee of Our Lady. Saint Louis de Montfort predicted that:

The power of Mary over all devils will be particularly outstanding in the last period of time. She will extend the Kingdom of Christ over the idolators and Moslems, and there will come a glorious era in which Mary will be ruler and queen of human hearts.⁵⁴

Catholic visionary Mary of Agreda, who wrote the classic *Mystical City of God*, conveyed what was told to her about the final era of peace:

Before the Second Coming of Christ, Mary must, more than ever, shine in mercy, might and grace in order to bring unbelievers into the **Catholic Faith**. The powers of Mary in the last times over demons will be very conspicuous. Mary will extend the reign of Christ

⁵⁰ Mark I. Miravalle, S.T.D., *The Dogma and the Triumph*, Santa Barbara, CA, Queenship Publishing, 1998.

⁵¹ For complete article refer to: “Definition Delayed, but Jubilee still offers hope,” Online posting, <http://www.immaculateheart.com/MaryOnline/html/co-redemptrix.html>, Aug. 30, 1999.

⁵² Ted and Maureen Flynn, *The Thunder of Justice*, Sterling, VA, MaxKol Communications, Inc., 1993, p. 231.

⁵³ Kunzli, p. 85. Message given to Ida Peerdeman on May 31, 1954.

⁵⁴ Petrisko, *Call of the Ages*, p. 449.

over the heathens and Mohammedans, and it will be a time of great joy when Mary, as Mistress and Queen of Hearts is enthroned.⁵⁵

Rome will Rule

When the apparition of Mary speaks of unity, she means unity under the Roman Catholic Church. It is under the Church of Rome that “Mary” wishes to establish world unity.

Both humanity [the whole world] and the Church [the Roman Catholic Church] will experience this new era... you will as of today see my light becoming stronger and stronger, until it encircles the whole earth, ready now to open itself to the new day, which will begin with the Triumph of my Immaculate Heart in the world.⁵⁶

A true reunification of Christians is not possible unless it be in the perfection of truth. And **truth has been kept intact only in the Catholic Church**, which must preserve it, defend it and proclaim it to all without fear.⁵⁷

Furthermore, Pope Pius IX made this remarkable prediction in 1878 concerning Mary’s role to establish the world under her Church, the Roman Catholic Church:

We expect that the Immaculate Virgin and Mother of God, Mary, through her most powerful intercession, will bring it about that our Holy Mother the Catholic Church... will gain in influence from day to day among all nations and in all places, prosper and rule from ocean to ocean, from the great stream to the ends of the earth; that she will enjoy peace and liberty... and there will be then one fold and one shepherd.⁵⁸

Queen of Muslims?

Think of the regions of our world today that are potential time bombs - powder kegs waiting to be ignited by some religious dispute. Can anyone imagine how religious differences could be resolved in these areas? Who alive on planet earth today could act as a mediator or diplomat that has the ability to bring about a peaceful resolution? Certainly for such an historic event to occur, a supernatural miracle would be required. There are some who are saying that Marian apparitions and the messages that “Mary” gives from heaven provide such a possibility.

While the title of this section may seem strange to the reader, it is appropriate, as we will see. How could “Mary” have any influence on the millions of Muslims who follow Allah? Those who have studied the Muslims holy book, known as the Koran, may be aware of the answer. First, the Koran portrays Jesus Christ as a prophet, unique in His preincarnate nature, miraculous birth, miracles and moral stature. Muslims revere Jesus Christ. As the Koran states:

The angels said to Mary: “God [Allah] bids you rejoice in a Word from Him. His name is the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary. He shall be noble in this world and in the world to come,

⁵⁵ Petrisko, p. 449.

⁵⁶ Thomas W. Petrisko, *The Last Crusade*, McKees Rocks, PA, St. Andrews Productions, 1996, p. 27. Message from “Mary” to Father Stefano Gobbi on Dec. 8, 1993.

⁵⁷ Fr. Don Stefano Gobbi, p. 278. Message given in Melbourne, Australia on October 27, 1980 to Father Gobbi.

⁵⁸ Thomas W. Petrisko, *For the Soul of the Family*, Santa Barbara, CA, Queenship Publishing, 1996, p. 92.

and shall be one of those who are favored. He shall preach to men in his cradle and in the prime of manhood, and shall lead a righteous life.”⁵⁹

It is interesting to note that in the Koran, Jesus is almost exclusively referred to as “Jesus son of Mary,” rather than “Son of God.” The Koran vehemently denies that Jesus is the Son of God, yet it holds both Jesus and Mary in high esteem. More important to our context, is the fact that Mary is arguably more highly honored than Jesus in the Koran and in the Muslim world. The Muslims, like the Catholics, refer to her as “Our Lady.” She is also venerated as a pure and holy saint in the Islamic world.

Furthermore, Mary is mentioned no less than 34 times in the Koran. In addition, the 19th surah (chapter) of the Koran is named after Mary. Based on these facts alone, it is apparent that “Our Lady” is surely seen as blessed above all women by orthodox Muslims. In addition, consider the following three quotes taken directly from the Koran:

And remember the angels’ words to Mary. They said: “God has chosen you. *He has made you pure and exalted you above womankind.*”⁶⁰

*The Messiah, the son of Mary, was no more than an apostle: other apostles passed away before him. His mother was a saintly woman.*⁶¹

Whereupon he [Jesus] spoke and said: “I am the servant of God. He has given me the Book and ordained me a prophet. His blessing is upon me wherever I go, and He has exhorted me to be steadfast in prayer and to give alms as long as I shall live. *He has exhorted me to honor my mother and has purged me of vanity and wickedness*”⁶²

Muslims and Apparitions of Mary

While it is apparent that Mary is considered by adherents of the Islamic faith to be the most blessed woman ever, does this necessarily imply that Muslims would respond to Marian apparitions or signs and wonders as many Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox Christians have done? Would Muslims listen to these apparitions and heed the messages? In order to answer this question, we can consider an apparition of Mary that appeared to millions of Muslims in the 20th century.

At a Coptic Orthodox church in Zeitoun, Egypt, a suburb of Cairo, a remarkable series of events occurred. A woman that onlookers believed was Mary, appeared in the form of an apparition, performing signs, wonders, and healings. This same woman appeared several nights each week for years. The vast majority of spectators were Muslim. Here is a description of the events surrounding the Zeitoun apparitions:

⁵⁹ N. J. Dawood, translator, *The Koran*, (Penguin Putnam, Inc., New York, 1997), pp. 46, 47, surah 3:40–3:46.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46, surah 3:40. [emphasis not in original]

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88, surah 5:75. [emphasis not in original]

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 216, surah 19:29. [emphasis not in original]

The Zeitoun apparitions... were seen by everyone present ... the persons present at apparitional events there varied from several thousand to over two hundred thousand per night. Total witnesses perhaps numbered into the millions.

Several nights each week, thousands of Muslims (who constituted most of the crowds) fell to their knees on prayer rugs spread wherever space permitted, and wept before the magnificent, wondrous, glorious form of Our Lady from Heaven. All witnesses agree that the Lady seemed to be composed of light that usually was intense, yet lessened occasionally.

The apparitions of “Mary, the Mother of Jesus” were serenely animate, moving from one side of the church roof to another, as if to provide a direct view to all the surrounding throng, from which many called to her to come their way. She often responded to the singing or chanting of the crowd, appearing to bow in acknowledgment, greeting and blessing. Sometimes she made gestures of prayer, or held out and waved what appeared to be an olive branch. At other times, thousands watched her radiant form, which was often aglow with bluish white light, as she held in her left arm what certainly appeared to be the baby Jesus.

The Zeitoun apparitions seemed to affect all witnesses, including hundreds who were spontaneously healed. Many such cases have been documented by Dr. Shafik Abd El Malik, M.B., B.Ch., M.D., Faculty of Medicine, Ain Shams University, who headed a commission of seven doctors to study the miraculous cures.⁶³

A Sign to Mankind

Think about the implications millions of Muslims responding to an apparition of Mary, falling to their knees and quoting from the Koran. Why did these followers of Allah respond to these signs and wonders? Why were they so sure that this apparitional woman was Mary? If events like these repeat in the 21st century for the entire world to behold, will the Islamic community follow “Mary”? While we can’t state with certainty what will happen, the following quotes taken directly from the Koran may lend some insight:

*We [Allah] made the son of Mary and his mother a sign to mankind, and gave them shelter on a peaceful hillside watered by a fresh spring. Apostles! Eat of that which is wholesome, and do good works: I have knowledge of all your actions. Your community is but one community, and I am your only Lord: therefore fear me. Yet men have divided themselves into factions, each rejoicing in his own doctrines. Leave them in their error till a time appointed.*⁶⁴

*And to the woman [Mary] who kept her chastity, We [Allah] breathed into her of Our spirit, and made her and her son a sign to all mankind. Your community is but one community, and I am Your only Lord. Therefore serve Me. Men have divided themselves into factions, but to Us shall they all return.”*⁶⁵

In addition, the Koran appears to lay a heavy emphasis on past and future signs as evidence that the Day of Judgment is at hand. The Koran states:

⁶³ Ray Stanford, *Fatima Prophecy*, (Ballantine Books, New York 1988), pp. 44–49.

⁶⁴ *Koran*, p. 243, surah 23:49. [emphasis not in the original]

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 233, surah 21:87. [emphasis not in the original]

The Day of Reckoning for mankind is drawing near, yet they blithely persist in unbelief. They listen with ridicule to each fresh warning that their Lord gives them: their hearts are set on pleasure... Yet though We showed them signs, the communities whom We destroyed before them did not believe either. Will they believe?⁶⁶

Concerning this “Hour of Doom,” which appears to be the Day of Judgment, Allah states: “We will show them Our signs in all the regions of the earth and in their own souls, until they clearly see that this [The Koran] is the truth.”⁶⁷

Is it possible that signs from “Mary” will persuade Muslims that she is a sign from Allah? Could this be one of the “lying signs and wonders” that Jesus warned about?⁶⁸ Is it reasonable to speculate that the Queen, through signs and wonders could convince many Muslims to become part of a world religion that contains the name of Christ? Might these same false signs and wonders deceive the world?

Muslims and Catholics

The Koran infers that Allah inspired the Bible, though Jews and Christians have corrupted the text.⁶⁹ Also, it is interesting to note that both Muslims and the Roman Catholic Church believe that Allah and the God of the Bible are the same. Quoting from the Catholic Catechism we read:

The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind’s judge on the last day.⁷⁰

How will the Muslims be included in this plan of salvation? Could the apparitions that perform numerous signs and wonders, impact “Christians” and Muslims who worship the same God? Could they possibly unite on this basis? Insight from the late Catholic priest Father Malachi Martin, in his popular book, *The Keys of this Blood*, may help answer these questions:

In reckoning the future of Islam, Pope Paul takes into account that as a genuinely religious faith, it preserves certain fundamental truths that the Holy Spirit reveals to all people of good will; and that, in God’s providence, Islam can be a threshold from which its adherents can be prepared to accept the only historical revelation made by God in this world. **There will come a day, John Paul believes, when the heart of Islam - already attuned to the figures of Christ and of Christ’s Mother, Mary - will receive the illumination it needs.** In the meantime, the Pontiff knows that Islam will stand against him and his church and his geopolitical vision.⁷¹

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 227, surah 21:1.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 338, surah 41:50.

⁶⁸ [Matthew 24:24](#)

⁶⁹ Abdiyah Akbar Abdul-Haqq, *Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim*, Minneapolis, Minnesota, (Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN, 1980), chapters 3 and 4, pp. 242–243

⁷⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (An Image Book, published by Doubleday, New York, 1994), pp. 242, 243, paragraph 841.

⁷¹ Malachi Martin, *The Keys of this Blood*, (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1990), p. 285.

An Old Mother for a New Age

It is one thing to see how Muslims and Catholics could find common ecumenical ground based on signs, wonders, and miracles associated with Marian apparitions. No doubt this would be one of the greatest religious miracles in history, encompassing half of the world's population. But there is another large group that would need to be tied into the one world religion.

There are hundreds of millions of people in the world today who believe in the gods of Eastern religion. These would include the millions who have converted to Eastern religion through what is commonly called the New Age Movement. It is interesting that Hindus, Buddhists, Native American Indian religions, New Agers and other similar groups already emphasize goddess worship and the earth as our living, breathing "Mother." These groups teach that all religions are similar and that we must unite to solve the myriad of problems facing mankind.

The book entitled *Mary's Message to the World* contains hundreds of revelations from "Mary," which fall in line with both New Age thinking and Eastern religious beliefs. Though many Catholics would deny that this is the same Mary that appears at Catholic apparition sites, the major Catholic Marian apparitions have never discredited a single apparition around the world. On the contrary, all apparitions emphasize that she is appearing everywhere with the same message. *Mary's Message to the World* can be found at almost any New Age bookstore and may represent one of the bridges between the Catholic Mary and the "Mary" who espouses New Age thinking. Here are a few of "Mary's" messages to the world:

Each religion is worshipping, underneath the outer trappings, its Creator. It is the same Creator! Whether you pray facing the east or facing an altar, or on Saturday or Sunday, it is all worship ... Allow us to view the world as a whole and each nation, each religion, as part of this Great Whole. Be tolerant, one of the other. All religions are man-made, inspired by the Creator. All words which have been written in the Holy Books have been written by men in unity with the Creator.⁷²

Once more, not surprisingly, "Mary's" message is to unite: "It is imperative that the world join together at this time to pray to God. Pray for peace on Earth and among men. I seek to embrace all people with my love. I wish to encircle all people on Earth in a safety net which will save your souls."⁷³ And finally this proclamation: "It is only as a whole unit that mankind can advance. Soon a giant leap forward will occur."⁷⁴

Reemergence of the Goddess

Within New Age and Eastern Religious circles, many acknowledge the great importance and reemergence of the goddess. She has always played a major part in their beliefs and worship. And accordingly, books like *The Goddess Re-Awakening* are predicting her triumphant comeback:

⁷² Annie Kirkwood, *Mary's Message to the World*, (A Perigee Book, New York, 1991), p. 145.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 168,169.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

But the presence of the Goddess herself has never departed from her holy place in our consciousness, and now, as we enter what many feel to be a “new age,” we sense that the Goddess is somehow making her way back to us. But in just what guise is so far unclear.”⁷⁵

Furthermore, those who hold Eastern and New Age beliefs are open to whatever form this returning goddess might assume. According to Caitlin Matthews, author of *Sophia Goddess of Wisdom*, this goddess has appeared in many varying forms in the past, and is sure to return soon. Matthews writes:

I have accordingly looked for the Goddess of Wisdom under many names and titles, including Nature, the World-Soul, the Blessed Virgin and the Shekinah, as well as her more usual designations. Each of them has retained some part of the Goddess’s image which, like a shattered mirror, waits to be reassembled... Nothing is going to delay the Goddess’s second coming, whether in the guise of Sophia or under any other form.⁷⁶

The re-emergence of the Divine Feminine the Goddess in the twentieth century has begun to break down the conceptual barriers erected by orthodox religion and social conservatism. For the first time in two millennia, the idea of a Goddess as a central pivot of creation is finding a welcome response.⁷⁷

Author Carol Christ explains more about this enthusiastic response for the re-emergence of the Divine Feminine in her book *Rebirth of the Goddess*:

One of the most unexpected developments of the late twentieth century is the rebirth of the religion of the Goddess in western cultures ... In America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, hundreds of thousands of women and increasing numbers of men brought up in biblical religions are rediscovering the language, symbols, and rituals of the Goddess.⁷⁸

Buddhist and Hindu Goddesses

An entire book could easily be written describing the rebirth of the goddess currently taking place in cultures and religions around the world. However, for the purposes of this article, a few more examples of the widespread worship and significance of this female deity will be sufficient. For example, Buddhists have a profound and intimate adoration for their female Savioreess who is called, Goddess Tara:

Perhaps because such a concept was too abstract for many people, there gradually grew up within Mahayanna Buddhism a need for a female figure... This figure came to be Tara, the Savioreess, whose name means star. Veneration of Tara seems to have begun around the seventh or eight century in India... The worship of the Goddess Tara is now one of the most widespread of Tibetan cults... from highest to lowest, the Tibetans realize with Tara a personal and enduring relationship, unmatched by any other single deity ... Tara, in other words, is the Divine Mother

⁷⁵ Beatrice Bruteau, compiled by Shirley Nicholson, *The Goddess Re-Awakening*, (The Theophical Publishing House, Wheaton, IL, 1994), p. 68.

⁷⁶ Caitlin Matthews, *Sophia Goddess of Wisdom*, Hammersmith, London, (Thorsons - An Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, London, 1992), pp. 11,332.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷⁸ Carol P. Christ, *Rebirth of the Goddess*, (Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Reading, MA., 1997), preface.

of Tibetan Buddhism, a tender, beautiful, intimately and personally concerned deity who protects all who turn to her...⁷⁹

This description of the Goddess Tara is remarkably similar to the descriptions given by visionaries who see the “Blessed Mother”. And Buddhism is not unique when it comes to their worship and affection given to their beloved goddess - all of the Eastern Religions worship female deities. For example, the Hindu religions are unmatched in their veneration of goddesses, as author David R. Kinsley describes:

One of the most striking characteristics of the ancient and multifaceted Hindu religious traditions is the importance of goddess worship. A considerable number of goddesses are known in the earliest Hindu scriptures, the Vedic hymns. In contemporary Hinduism the number and popularity of goddesses are remarkable. No other living religious tradition displays such an ancient, continuous, and diverse history of goddess worship.⁸⁰

There is no end of documentation with regard to the importance of the female deities to the religions and cultures of the world. Whether we refer to the holy woman of Native American Indians, known as the “White Buffalo Calf Pipe Woman,” or we refer to the “Shing Moo” or “Holy Mother” of the Chinese, one thing is consistent, all are worshipping a powerful, yet loving goddess.

Who Is this Queen?

The Book of Revelation warns about a counterfeit religious system. Bible-believing Christians call this global religion the counterfeit bride. John the apostle labeled this false church the harlot. The Scriptures also indicate the harlot is associated with a “queen.” In Revelation chapter eighteen we read:

“For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, ... In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘**I sit as queen**, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’ Therefore her plagues will come in one day; death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.”⁸¹

John is not the only prophet who saw there was a queen and that this queen would be judged for the whole world to see at the end of the age. The prophet Isaiah also warned about a deceiving woman called the “virgin daughter of Babylon” who would be judged by God. In the 47th chapter of Isaiah we read:

Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called Tender and delicate. Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, take off the skirt, Uncover the thigh, Pass through the rivers. Your nakedness shall be uncovered, yes, your

⁷⁹ Andrew Harvey and Anne Baring, *The Divine Feminine: Exploring the Feminine Face of God Around the World*, (Conari Press, Berkeley, CA, 1996), p. 140.

⁸⁰ David R. Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, (University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1989), p. 1.

⁸¹ Revelation 18:3, 7, 8

shame will be seen; I will take vengeance, and I will not arbitrate with a man. As for our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, the Holy One of Israel. Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no longer be called **The Lady of Kingdoms.**⁸²

Who is this “Lady of Kingdoms” that Isaiah is prophesying about? Apparently she is a female entity that has played a deceptive role and is somehow connected to the pagan religious practices of ancient Babylon. Isaiah’s words bring a strong retribution and condemnation upon those who have rejected the true Redeemer, the “Holy One of Israel” - the LORD of hosts is *His* name.

We know from biblical history that a queen, (the Queen of Heaven) has played a significant role in deluding people of the past.⁸³ Is it possible that this same Queen of Heaven will delude the world once more? Is the apparition of Mary paving the way for such a delusion?

Return of the Goddess

For those who are still not willing to heed the warnings of the Bible about the reappearance of a Babylonian-like church, consider the following quote taken from the book *Myths of the Female Divine Goddess*:

But Goddess has never died, and one of the major spiritual and psychological phenomena of our time has been her reemergence as a significant presence in our lives. She has founded a central place in several of the great world religions particularly, Catholicism and Hinduism. Goddess has been revived in modern cults, the spiritual ancestors of which are the earth cults of Demeter, Isis, and Asherah. She has made herself known in the metaphors, the myths, of modern science particularly, psychology and climatology. She has expressed herself politically and sociologically in the drive for a new wholeness a new spiritual, psychological, and physical ecology that is the power behind what we call the women’s movement. Goddess is returning because she is needed.

The return of Goddess in the patriarchal religious context is most clearly illustrated in the progress of the Virgin Mary from her original status in the New Testament as humble birth-giver and grieving mother to that of immaculately conceived Queen of Heaven. The progress was not an easy one. It was consistently resisted by the Church, which in the gospels the biography of Jesus finally approved in the fourth century, gave Mary a minor role. But once the divinity of Jesus was established, it was inevitable that Mary, his mother, should be seen as Goddess by a folk mind familiar with the goddesses Asherah, Demeter, and Isis. As Jesus emerged as the New Adam, the new redeeming and edible fruit on the tree—cross that had replaced the forbidden fruit the tree of knowledge in the old Garden of Eden, Mary logically became the sinless new Eve, the balancing feminine principle to the male redeemer. A belief that she had been immaculately conceived, a belief the Roman Catholic Church accepted as dogma only in 1854.

⁸² [Isaiah 47:1–5](#)

⁸³ [Jeremiah 7](#) and [Jeremiah 44](#)

Over the centuries, other folk traditions attached themselves to Mary. Special goddess cakes were offered up to her, as they had been earlier to Asherah.⁸⁴

Or finally one more quote from the same book that will further document that Babylonianism is being revived in the name of Christianity:

But as Queen, Mary grew in power. She was the Church itself, in which Christ was contained. She became in a sense the Bride of Christ and was often referred to as such. Once again, Goddess has emerged in union with the sacrificed son-lover. Churches were named for her more often than for other saints or for Jesus. Statues and paintings of Mary became and remain objects for both private and public adoration. In these works, Mary is depicted more often as crowned queen than as humble maiden. Sometimes she holds the crowned Christ-king on her lap, much as Isis held the pharaohs of Egypt on hers. Many of the Virgin Mary paintings and statues, especially in France, depict a Black Madonna, linking Mary to other Black Goddesses whose color reflects the dark earth of Goddess's origins. To these objects of devotion, magical powers and sometimes strange rituals and celebrations have been attached.⁸⁵

It is apparent from reading these statements that a revival of Babylonism in the name of Christ is now underway. The Bible indicates that this harlot's false religion will encompass the globe.⁸⁶ Her counterfeit church will consist of people from all nations, multitudes, and tongues. But God's call is to "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues" ([Revelation 18:4](#)). That is our prayer for all those who have been led astray.

Excerpts for this article taken from the following books: 1) Jim Tetlow, *Messages from Heaven: A Biblical Examination of the Apparitions of the Virgin Mary*. 2) Jim Tetlow, *The Queen and Her King: End-Time Deceptions in the Name of Christ*. 3) Roger Oakland, *New Wine and The Babylonian Vine: End Times Delusion in the Name of Christ* (Used by permission). As of the writing of this article, these three books are awaiting publication. For information e-mail Jim Tetlow at [jttetlow1@rochester.rr.com](mailto:jtetlow1@rochester.rr.com)

The Lost Soul of Scott Hahn

John W. Robbins

**Rome Sweet Home: Our Journey to Catholicism.
Scott and Kimberly Hahn.
San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993.**

⁸⁴ David Leemings and Jake Page, *Myths of the Female Divine Goddess*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1994), pp. 161–162.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁸⁶ [Isaiah 47:5](#); [Revelation 17:15](#)

Foreword by Peter Kreeft, xiv+182, pictures.

What sorts of people write autobiographies when they are healthy and well at 35? Generally there are three sorts: egotists, egomaniacs, and megalomaniacs. There seems to be no other plausible reason for writing the story of one's life when it has barely begun. But the fawning Peter Kreeft, a confused mind who wrote the Foreword for this book, disagrees. According to Kreeft, Scott and Kimberly Hahn are "one of the beautiful and bright-shining stars in the firmament of hope for our desperate days." The Hahns, writes Kreeft shamelessly, "are simply very bright, clear-thinking and irrefutably reasonable...passionately in love with Truth and with honesty. They are incapable of fudging anything except fudge." Kreeft calls the Hahns "stars" for only one reason: their noisy rejection of Christianity and conversion to Roman Catholicism. They have no other "achievement."

I once knew Scott Hahn. I met him about twelve years ago when he was a Presbyterian minister living in the Washington, D.C. area. (I had spoken to Hahn by phone before that: When he was a student at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, I paid him to record the guest lectures of Gordon Clark at the seminary.) Being an administrative assistant to a Member of Congress at the time, I invited Hahn (and others) to speak to a group of Congressional staffers, and he spoke on his favorite topic, "familism," which is his apotheosis of the family. At the time I had no knowledge of Hahn's real theological views; I was naive enough to think that a Presbyterian minister actually believed Presbyterian doctrine and Hahn dissembled well enough. He fooled me, and a number of other people as well. In a discussion I had with Hahn after his lecture, it became clear that one of Hahn's preoccupations in addition to his obsession with the notion of family was eschatology: He was a postmillennialist who had been heavily influenced by the Reconstructionist movement. In fact, he was the (unordained) pastor of a Reconstructionist church in Fairfax, Virginia.

Romeward Bound

Hahn is one of a few seminary-trained, apparently well-educated Protestant ministers who have joined the Roman Catholic Church over the last few years. The Hahns have gained some notoriety from their speeches and tapes, and now this book, which is based on their speeches, will add to that notoriety. One remark his wife makes in this book suggests that Hahn's desire to be noticed is great: "Scott suffered tremendous loneliness. He was misunderstood and rejected by many Protestant friends who didn't want to talk to him... He felt that former professors didn't think he was worth pursuing to convince him he was wrong [about Scripture]. And he couldn't understand the nonchalance of a number of [Roman] Catholics at Marquette [University, where Hahn was a student at the time] over his conversion, acting rather hohum over the whole thing, rather than welcoming him for all he had risked and left behind". What good is being a martyr if no one notices you?

Two other men defected to Rome as a result of Hahn's influence: his seminary classmate Gerald Matatics, and Presbyterian Church in America minister William Bales. Other defections, such as that of author Thomas Howard, are apparently unrelated to Hahn's. Why were these men seduced by Rome? The answers to that question are complex. Each man's seduction is probably unique. But there are some features of Hahn's seduction that reveal fatal weaknesses in what passes for contemporary Protestant Christianity. Today Hahn teaches at the Franciscan Seminary of Steubenville (Ohio), a charismatic Roman Catholic institution. His wife, the daughter of a

Presbyterian clergyman, is also a graduate of Gordon-Conwell. She wanted to be a pastor, she says.

Liberalism and Arminianism

The first of the reasons for Hahn's conversion to Romanism is liberalism and Arminianism. Hahn tells us that he was "baptized a Presbyterian" and "raised in a nominal Protestant home. Church and religion played a small role in my life and for my family as a teenager, he was a drug-using criminal who lied his way out of jail: "Faced with a yearlong sentence to a detention center for a variety of charges, I barely lied my way out of the sentence and into six months of probation instead" (1). In high school Hahn became active in Young Life, an Arminian evangelistic group. There he read Paul Little and C. S. Lewis. He also had some religious experiences:

"Before finishing my sophomore year, I experienced the transforming power of God's grace in conversion. Within the next year, I experienced a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a personal and life-changing way." Apparently Hahn had both a conversion experience and a charismatic experience in high school. In his senior year, he met the Presbyterian John Gerstner, "one of my favorite theologians" (31). While in high school, Hahn also became enamored of Luther and Calvin) apparently because they appealed to his need for heroes: "I decided the figures in Christian history who most appealed to me... were the great protestant reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin" (5). But the theologies of Luther and Calvin seemed to play relatively small parts in Hahn's thinking; he was fascinated by other things. A guitarist, Hahn liked modern music: "The summer before going off to college, I toured the United States, Scotland, England and Holland, playing guitar in a Christian musical group, the Continentals" (13). Hahn attended the theologically liberal but economically conservative Grove City college, a college affiliated with the mainline Presbyterian church, where he concentrated in theology, philosophy, and economics, and continued his activity in Young Life. While in college, Hahn "discovered that the covenant was *really* the key for unlocking the whole Bible" (17). Beware the man who thinks he has discovered some sort of "key" for understanding the Bible, whether it is the idea of covenant, a scheme of dispensations (instituted by covenants), or a five-point covenantal model.

Thomism and Evidentialism

The second major factor influencing Hahn's conversion to Rome seems to be the official Roman Catholic philosophy of Thomas Aquinas and evidentialism. While at nominally Protestant Grove City College, Hahn "had become enamored with and steeped in the philosophy of Saint Thomas. In spite of my anti-Catholic outlook, I had known a good thing when I found it, and in my mind, no one could compare to Aquinas... I had devoured his philosophical writings, especially his metaphysics, eventually acquiring the odd and unlikely reputation for being an 'evangelical Thomist'" (101).

During his first years in Gordon-Conwell Seminary, 1979–81, Hahn suffered from a confused mental state: "At this point I would describe my study as a *detective* story. I was searching Scripture to discover clues as to the whereabouts of real Christianity" (25). Although Hahn does not mention it in the book, his tuition at Gordon-Conwell was paid by a Calvinist Christian businessman who wanted to support a student who understood both free market

economics and Christian theology, for the purpose of being able to teach economics to clergymen and Christian theology to economists. Hahn was highly recommended to the businessman by the Chairman of the Economics Department at Grove City. What Hahn learned at Grove City was Thomism, and his interest in economics which he says he studied only to mollify his “practical” father, not because he was genuinely interested in the subject, has disappeared. Hahn’s obsession is to convert Christians to Catholicism, not to educate clergymen about principles of economics or economists about Christian theology. He owes one Christian businessman many thousand dollars and his former economics professor an apology.

Justification by Works and Norman Shepherd

While he was at Gordon-Conwell being supported by a Calvinist Christian businessman, Hahn adopted the Roman Catholic view of justification: “When Christ formed the New Covenant with us, then, it was much more than a simple contract or legal exchange, where he took our sin and gave us his righteousness, as Luther and Calvin explained it... In fact, I discovered that nowhere did Saint Paul ever teach that we were justified by faith *alone!* *Sola fide* was unscriptural! “I was so excited about this discovery. I shared it with some friends, who were amazed at how much sense it made. Then one friend stopped me and asked if I knew who else was teaching this way on justification. When I responded that I didn’t, he told me that Dr. Norman Shepherd, a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary (the strictest Presbyterian Calvinist seminary in America) was about to undergo a heresy trial for teaching the same view of justification that I was expounding. “So I called Professor Shepherd and talked with him. He said he was accused of teaching something contrary to the teachings of Scripture, Luther and Calvin. As I heard him describe what he was teaching, I thought, hey, that *is* what I’m saying” (30–31).

As for Kimberly, “At this point [more than halfway through seminary] I was not steeped in Reformation theology, so the change in how I viewed justification did not seem momentous” (42). Please consider the import of that statement. Here are two graduates of a Presbyterian College, two students nearing completion of their studies at reputedly one of the best evangelical Protestant seminaries in the country, two professing Christians—and the meaning of justification is not all that important to them. As we shall soon see, despite—or rather because of—their education, the Hahns—especially Scott—could not defend the Reformation principles of the Bible alone, faith alone, and Christ alone.

Reconstructionism and Theonomy

The fourth major influence on Hahn’s conversion to Romanism was the Reconstructionist movement. After attending seminary, Hahn had intended to study theology at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, where he had been accepted, but he changed his mind because of Margaret Thatcher: “Margaret Thatcher made it almost impossible for Americans to have babies at British taxpayers’ expense; so we took this as sign for us to look elsewhere for work, delaying doctoral studies for a while” (32). Not having paid for his own education, Hahn apparently did not intend to pay for his children either. The principles of economics seem to have been quite forgotten.

Instead, Hahn was hired as pastor and school-teacher by a Reconstructionist church in Fairfax, Virginia: “When I candidated for the position at Trinity Presbyterian Church, I shared my views and concerns regarding justification that I took Dr. Shepherd’s position. They

understood and said they did too. So shortly before graduation, I accepted the pastorate at Trinity, as well as a teaching position in their high school, Fairfax Christian School” (33). The Reconstructionist church was not fooled: They knew quite well that Hahn had defected from the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith, and they wanted him for that reason.

While pastoring the Reconstructionist church, Hahn “began to see how important liturgy was for the covenant... Liturgy represented the way God fathered the covenant family...” (43). “My parishioners grew excited. The elders even asked me to revise our liturgy.” While teaching his ideas at the school, his Roman Catholicism was so obvious that several of his students told him he should join the Roman Catholic church. (Someone should write a book about Reconstructionist churches and their affinity for Roman Catholic and Orthodox liturgy and doctrine.) Hahn was also invited to teach at Dominion Theological Institute (which later merged with Chesapeake Theological Seminary). During this period he became convinced of the Roman doctrine that Jesus Christ was physically present in the bread and the wine. Thus, when one participates in the mass, one is eating the physical body and drinking the physical blood of Christ. The proper name for the practice—if Catholics were actually doing what they dogmatically assert that they are doing—is ritual cannibalism.

Hahn was also teaching his seminary students contrary to what the seminary itself believed, contrary to what he was being paid to teach, and without informing the leadership of the seminary—that justification by faith alone was false. The fact that he was denying the Christian doctrine of justification while being paid to teach it does not seem to bother him. Oddly, Hahn opens his book with this story designed to illustrate his lifelong honesty: “I recall the last time I ever attended our family’s church. The minister was preaching all about his doubts regarding the Virgin Birth of Jesus and his bodily Resurrection. I just stood up in the middle of his sermon and walked out. I remember thinking, I’m not sure what I believe, but at least I’m honest enough not to stand up and attack the things I’m supposed to teach” (1). But that is exactly what Hahn did when he taught seminary classes, and that is exactly what he did when he accepted money for seminary tuition under false pretenses. After Hahn attacked *sola fide* in his seminary classes in Virginia, one of the students challenged him to defend *sola scriptura*. He could not (51–52). After seven years in “Protestant” educational institutions, and now a Presbyterian minister, Hahn, who by all accounts was an excellent student, could not defend the major principles of the Protestant Reformation.

Messages from God and Mary

The Hahns left Virginia and moved back to Grove City, where Scott took a job as assistant to the college president and instructor in theology, of all things. Liberalism, Arminianism, Thomism, evidentialism, and Reconstructionism had persuaded Hahn of the truth of Catholicism, and now Mary clinched the argument: Hahn began feeling that God was “calling me into the [Roman] Catholic Church” (60). Scott and Kimberly got “feelings,” “leadings,” “nudges,” “peace,” impressions,” and “callings,”—alleged messages from God and his mother, Mary. While teaching theology at Grove City College, Hahn drove down to Duquesne University in Pittsburgh for theology classes. There he was “the only student defending Pope John Paul II!” (66), and there he first became involved with Opus Dei (67). After someone mailed him a Rosary, Hahn decided to perform an experiment by praying to Mary about an “impossible situation.” Hahn prayed and the impossible situation resolved itself within three months. In

Hahn's irrational mind, praying the Rosary obviously worked. As a result, Hahn now prays to Mary daily.

That, of course, is how all superstitions begin: committing the logical fallacy *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. Leaving Grove City, Hahn decided to continue his studies at Marquette University. While in Milwaukee he learned that his seminary classmate, Gerald Matatics, was going to be absorbed into the Roman Catholic church two weeks later at Easter, 1986. Hahn, who had talked Matatics into Roman Catholicism, could not stand to have him go first, yet Hahn had promised his wife that he would not become a Roman Catholic until 1990. He asked her to pray about releasing him from his promise, and she did so. Hahn and Matatics were both absorbed by the Roman Catholic Church in 1986. Hahn says that he "had fallen head over heels in love with our Lord in the Eucharist!" (88).

Kimberly was jealous of Scott's long walks and talks with Mary. During Christmas 1986, Kimberly, who was pregnant, got a "word from the Lord" concerning her baby (115). When the baby was baptized a Roman Catholic, Kimberly "was astounded at the beauty of the liturgy" (117). Kimberly "came to appreciate that [baby] Hannah had become a child of God through baptism, being born again by water and the Spirit. As I studied baptism, it connected with what I had already done on justification. As with Scott, my study in seminary had led me to reject as unscriptural the Protestant teaching of justification by faith alone" (137). [Note well: "As with Scott, my study in seminary had led me to reject as unscriptural the Protestant teaching of justification by faith alone."]

When Hahn was confirmed, he chose Francis de Sales as his "patron saint," because "de Sales happened to be the Bishop of Geneva, Switzerland, while John Calvin was leading the people farther away from the Catholic Faith.... [He] was such an effective preacher and apologist that, through his sermons and pamphlets, over forty thousand Calvinists were brought back into the Church" (133).

John Gerstner and Robert Knudsen

Before defecting to Rome, Hahn and Matatics had met with John Gerstner, the evidentialist Presbyterian theologian who was unable to persuade them of the errors of Roman Catholicism. After his conversion, Hahn debated with Robert Knudsen, the Dooyeweerdian and Van Tilian professor of apologetics at Westminster Seminary, about *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*. Hahn writes: "I never dreamed of such a positive outcome. Not only did the Westminster Seminary students in attendance express their surprise and excitement at the end," his wife was impressed too. I have listened to that debate on cassette tape, and Apologetics Professor Knudsen's performance is embarrassing and incompetent.

Meeting the Pope

In January 1992, Dr. Jerry Kirk, Hahn's father-in-law, a Presbyterian minister in Cincinnati, invited Hahn to accompany him to Rome to meet the pope. There he met the "Holy Father" for a few seconds and the next day went to a chapel for mass with the pope. He embraced the pope, giving him a personal letter and a check. "As I left the presence of Pope John Paul II—the one anointed by my heavenly Father and eldest Brother to shepherd the covenant family of God on earth—I had a strong sense that God was saying, 'Scott, the best is yet to come'" (172). Hahn does not explain this dark, oracular saying: Does it mean that he will be elected the first

American pope? Appointed cardinal? Invited to Rome to join the Vatican lowerarchy? Named Grand Inquisitor? We are not told.

The State of Contemporary “Protestantism”

Hahn’s defection is one of several similar defections. They are occurring, not because Rome is a true church, but because of the apostasy of “Protestantism.” The largest American Protestant denominations are either unbelieving or unknowing, priding themselves on their rejection of Scripture, their vacuous faith, or their limited knowledge. Many smaller denominations and independent churches are in little better condition. They are largely Arminian which is semi-Romanist already, believing in man’s free will; revivalist—which is informed by Roman Catholic experientialism; [or charismatic which continues Rome’s theology of miracles and gifts.] American “Protestantism” is mostly Roman Catholic already. Some of the more conservative churches have been led astray by Reconstructionism, by religiously cooperative efforts in the anti-abortion movement, by programs of social and political reform. Just when the preaching of the Gospel is most urgently needed, it is rarely heard in “Protestant” pulpits. It is doubtful that most graduates of theological schools could give a clear and accurate summary of the Gospel. The Roman Catholic church is by far the largest ecclesiastical organization in America with about 58 million subjects; it operates tens of thousands of churches, thousands of schools, and hundreds of colleges. Worldwide, it claims more than 950 million subjects. Its loyal American subjects are becoming more and more militant in every area. Hahn’s own zeal for the pope is reflected not only in this book, but in the scores of tapes he and his wife have produced and which have been distributed by the hundreds of thousands. Only the grace of God can save us from another Dark Age and the church that Luther recognized as the slaughterhouse of souls.

May God send forth his light and his truth.

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