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THE DECEIVERS

Rick Warren—the Pied Piper of Purpose Driven—along with others in [The Ecumenical Church of Deceit](#) of [new evangelicalism](#) are leading people along the ecumenical road back to her mother the apostate [Church of Rome](#) through [contemplative spirituality](#). And not only is this heading in the opposite direction from the Protestant Reformation, but together they actually want to completely undo this return to the historic orthodox Christian faith and to Biblical authority. But the question the discerning Christian needs to ask is: Have the Deceivers from the Church of Rome really changed? Or are Evangelical Protestants about to follow those seducing spirits right back into the blind bondage of Roman Catholicism...or worse...

Who are *The Deceivers*? A thorough examination of the apostate Church of Rome will reveal why this proves an apt title. In our generation we haven't really been able to see the full deception yet, because just as the frog wouldn't notice the temperature of the water in a pot slowly rising until he would end up boiling to death, so we Christians in America didn't notice just how worldly Evangelicalism was becoming.

But godly men like A.W. Tozer could see it. In the 1950's he wrote:

Sometimes we hear of a politician or other celebrity who is made an honorary member of some organization]... Compare this to many evangelical churches, which have altogether too many members who are Christian by initiation, not by spiritual birth... All the religious ceremonies invented by the prolific minds of all the religious leaders of the world cannot make a Christian out of a sinner. No man, regardless of how rich and mysterious his robes may be, can make a Christian out of another man... The best we can hope for there is religion by initiation. Seekers come out only as honorary Christians. The root of life is not in them and they deserve more pity. Our Lord tells us plainly that we must be born again before we enter the kingdom of God" (**This World: Playground or Battleground?**, pp.80-81).

And Tozer couldn't have been more correct than when he said:

Christians habitually weep and pray over beautiful truth, only to draw back **from** that same truth when it comes to the difficult job of putting it into practice! Actually, the average church simply does not dare to check its practices against biblical precepts. It **tolerates** things that are diametrically opposed to the will of God, and if the matter is pointed out to its leaders, they will defend its unscriptural practices with a casuistry equal to the verbal dodgings of the **Roman** moralists...

Since Christ makes His appeal directly to the will, are we justified in wondering whether or not these divided souls have ever made a true commitment to the Lord? Or whether they have been inwardly renewed? It does appear that too many Christians want to enjoy the thrill of **feeling** right but not willing to endure the inconvenience of **being** right!

Jesus Himself left a warning – *I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.* [Rev. 3:1b] (**Renewed Day by Day**, May 2, emphasis added).

Whatever Happened To The Protestant Reformation?

However, in what directly concerns the topic of this work, the false system of religion taught by the Church of Rome, we need to remember that Evangelicalism finds its roots in the Protestant Reformation. And history shows us that those Reformers would end up living out the unshakable truth of these insightful comments from William Wilberforce, an English reformer and anti-slavery activist in the early 1800's –

Christianity has always thrived under persecution. At such times she has no lukewarm professors, no adherents concerning whom it is doubtful to what party they belong. The Christian is then reminded at every turn that His Master's kingdom is not of this world (as cited in Nick Harrison, **365 WWJD?**, p.75).

These courageous men – many of whom were murdered **by** orders from Roman Popes – never had the option of so-called "dialogue" over doctrinal issues with Rome that so many of our current Evangelical leaders have been seduced by. Instead these Reformers, who for the most part were themselves Roman Catholic priests working from within the Church of Rome, trying to bring its leaders back onto the narrow road, were simply rounded up and killed to silence them. And amazingly enough, not only just to silence them, but also in an attempt to keep the revealed Word of God—found in the Holy Scriptures—out of the hands of the laity.

Are we really supposed to believe *this* is the one **true** Church on the face of the earth—headed by the successor of the Apostle Peter—the Pope? Do we really think that it was God Who wanted these kinds of things done? For do you not realize: If the Church of Rome really is the true Church, then logically we would be forced to this very conclusion. As we continue you will plainly come to see Rome's devious plan regarding the so-called ecumenical movement exposed as the subtle deception that it actually is.

And since our Evangelical Protestant leaders continue to give great lip service to what the Reformers did for the Church, do we really think that our Lord wishes His precious Body to then go back to the idolatrous Harlot that the Church of Rome truly is? How pathetic it was to see an article in a recent issue of *Christianity Today* praising Pope John Paul II—a heretic who lived in the lap of luxury—and accepted worship from men as their "Holy Father," all the while claiming the title "Vicar of Jesus Christ," both of which are titles that can only be applied to Almighty God himself! We must ask ourselves: Is that how Christ Jesus of Nazareth lived?

Our blessed Lord clearly told us in Scripture Who His **true** Vicar is:

*Howbeit when **he, the Spirit of truth**, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. (John 16:13-15).*

If you are a true Christian, and as you are made aware of these issues, it should begin to stir you. You should be able to feel the Lord's anger rise within you when His Church is being raped by these men from Rome who have – *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*: (2 Timothy 3:5a). Until we as His true Christians finally begin to rise *against* the muddled ideals and the false spirit behind the ecumenical movement (see- 1 John 4:1) – rather than running to join it as with the misguided "modern" Church Growth Movement – then people will continue to go to Hell in unprecedented numbers in our lifetime.

Don't you know, a very strong case can be made, that our generation is among the worst in this regard since the Reformation happened. *Could* it actually be that we will stand before the one true and living God having slept while millions went to a Christ-less eternity because we were busy attempting to get back into bed with one of most notorious spiritual whores in the history of mankind? And don't we know that absolutely nothing has changed since Luther nailed the **95 Theses** to the door of Wittenburg—except perhaps the zeal of the Body of Christ.

The Ecumenical Road—The Broad Path That Leads To Destruction

Let's quickly look at 2 Timothy 3:5 again, as I want you to see what the *actual* Vicar of Christ—God the Holy Spirit—has to tell us about the proper concept of Christian unity. And this is something which quite indispensable for us to become aware of because it concerns the Church of Rome and *how it has a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*. What does the next part of this verse say? "Make sure you focus your time and energy to put your

'differences' aside for the sake of unity before the world." No! It reads – *from such **turn away***.

In other words, have **nothing** to do with them. Why? Because God doesn't want a phony unity of so-called "brotherly love." Instead He wants a people called out and separate from all that kind of lukewarm and "sicky-sweet" tripe. The Lord desires a *holy priesthood* (see-1 Peter 2:5) who will *come out from among* (see-2 Corinthians 6:17) all those **self**-righteous fools as they walk together hand in hand down "Primrose Lane" along the broad road of religion that ultimately leads to destruction (see-Matthew 7:13), all the while ignorantly singing – "merrily–merrily–merrily–merrily; life is but a dream." The task of the true disciple of Christ is to tell them: Wake Up! Man, your dream ends in Hell!

The Holy Spirit says – *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death* (Proverbs 14:12). Further we must remember that God hates self-righteousness, as He especially knows that in our haughty culture, and especially among our young, who are being seduced by the self-aggrandizing Rap community – *There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up* (Proverbs 30:13).

The blatant pride of this generation has brought our nation ever closer to the perilous danger of suddenly incurring the wrath of Almighty God. He does not sleep, for the Scripture clearly says that the Lord **will** – not might – God will *save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks* (Psalm 18:27).

The Vicar Of Deception

And finally, in the "short" time that we have left in this Age of God's grace, the Christian will be required to sound the alarm that in 1 Corinthians 6 (vv.9-10) the Lord has warned with crystalline clarity – *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

And so with this as our backdrop let us now consider the following from that *Christianity Today* article which I mentioned earlier, an article clearly written in a spirit of praise for the late Pope John Paul II.

When Karol Wojtyla stepped out on the Vatican balcony on October 16, 1978, as the new Pope John Paul II, waving to the crowds in St. Peter's Square on the first day of his auspicious papacy, the person preaching **for** him in his home pulpit back in Krakow, Poland, was none other than **Billy Graham**. Behind that fact is a surprising story of the late pope's personal involvement with **American evangelicals**. With his passing, it is time to tell that story.

In the mid-1970s, American mission organizations like the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association began taking the gospel behind the Iron Curtain to Eastern Europe. After Graham's first "communist" crusade in Hungary in 1977, he was invited to the predominately Catholic country of Poland by the tiny Protestant community there, which amounted to less than 1 percent of the population. Just as in his 1957 New York City crusade, **Graham wanted to work with as many Catholics as possible** (David Scott, "The Pope We Never Knew," May 2005, p.34, emphasis added).

You know I'm just not a good enough writer to make all these things up! It is truly amazing to watch this chain of events unfold. Can you believe what we just read from "Christianity Astray" – thank you Ron Gleason – *Christianity Today*, a magazine founded by Billy Graham along with a couple of other Evangelical Protestant leaders.

And in this May issue we read: "Graham **wanted** to work with as many Catholics as possible." Why thank you Billy Graham! I wonder how John Hus and Luther and Latimer and Ridley would view that pathetically nauseating stand regarding the Church of Rome by a professed Protestant Evangelical. And one who is revered as a Christian statesman at that! O how far we are sinking.

Now just watch how these events will unfold for us. Later on in that very same article itself we are told that just about the time Pope John Paul II sealed his own doom by accepting the papacy, the late Bill Bright founder of **Campus Crusade For Christ**, met with the late Father Franciszek Blachnicki. A man who just "happened" to be a close friend of the Pope. It would

appear interesting that neither of these men reside on this planet any longer. "Except for a "few fine points," Bright concluded, "there was basically no difference between what he believed and what I believed" (ibid., p.36). Really? Yes, we've heard all that before.

Here is some further proof of Satan's subtlety and lies. It seems that, "Little more than a decade later, in 1994, Bright was one of the signers of *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* (ECT)—a statement of shared convictions by 40 Protestant and Catholic leaders" (ibid). Indeed Bright was one of the signers of ECT, along with Southern Baptist statesman Chuck Colson, who was one of the men who helped to draft that dubious document!

You may remember that ECT first came out it was the subject for discussion in a series on **The John Ankerberg Show** which featured Dr. D. James Kennedy, Dr. R.C. Sproul and Dr. John MacArthur. What you might not know was that Dr. J.I. Packer and Colson met with these men later in Kennedy's office and *defended* their being involved with ECT in the first place. Now in this *Christianity Today* article years later we find out how all this came about. "Bright attributed his support [of ECT] to his personal confidence in the spiritual authenticity of Catholic reformers like Wojtyla and Blachnicki, a **trust that was established through their history of working together**" (ibid., emphasis added). Are you able to discern the conniving work of *the father of lies*—the Devil—here?

And tragically the truth gets even more twisted. "Wojtyla's papacy *benefited* from his exposure to **American evangelicalism**. Through his global travels to reinvigorate the Catholic Church, he became... 'the most visible pope in history,' yet he did so in worldwide open-air crusades whose staging is more typical of Billy Graham than the Vatican" (ibid, p.37, emphasis added). The truth is these Evangelicals were being **used** by Pope John Paul II in his attempt to make the Church of Rome look before the world like it really is this organization of tolerance, and that it is actually interested in working on real reforms with Protestants.

Unstable Double-minded Deception

Then look at who *else* ends up being mentioned in the article:

The late pope had seen how mass mobilization centered on a conservative piety could accelerate church renewal. Later he approached the challenges of his papacy with the same mix of traditional spirituality and popular mobilization.

In this respect, **John Paul II was not all that different from Bill Hybels or Rick Warren**. He tried to harness the forms of popular culture to conservative piety in order to reinvigorate the church. Ironically, while much of American Catholicism has resisted Wojtyla's conservatism, many lapsed American Catholics have fueled the growth of evangelical mega-churches such as Willow Creek and Saddleback (ibid., emphasis added).

You do have to admit, it is rather curious how all these names, keep showing up all intertwined isn't it? You need to know that the Church Growth Movement and the ecumenical movement are simply two sides of the **exact** same bankrupt coin of apostasy. And should you still have doubts that the Lord is trying to alert us to something untoward here – now we uncover the wolf in sheep's clothing. The reader is asked to look closely at this last part of our examination of this *Christianity Today* article. For you must understand that Pope John Paul II:

who as a bishop oversaw American evangelicals working in his diocese in Poland is the **same pope who called evangelicals in South America "rapacious wolves"** for their evangelism of Catholics.

In Poland, foreign evangelicalism posed no threat to the cultural monopoly held by the Polish Catholic church, so evangelicals' assistance was gladly accepted in the fight against communism, but in South America, **evangelicals were the competition**.

The pope who in his 1995 encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* invited input from non-Catholic Christians on the primacy of the office of Peter, **is the same man** whose Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1999 **declared the primacy of Peter "immutable"** (ibid., emphasis added).

Anyone who has read **Vatican I** could have told you that would happen. As we turn to "Chapter 2." of "Session 4" – July 18, **1870** – of the official record, it begins with these words

– “On the **permanence** of the primacy of blessed Peter **in the Roman pontiffs**” (<http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V1.HTM#6>). Pope John Paul II’s empty words are simply regurgitating Roman Catholic dogma as articulated some 129 years prior! Such are the words of *The Deceivers*, and Jesus told us, *Ye shall know them by their fruits* (Matthew 7:16).

It would certainly appear that John Paul II was acting as a hypocrite in 1999 and never had *any* intention of altering the papacy – for Rome will never surrender this permanent **man**-made office—which is the very zenith of human pride! I tell you in the Lord, when the Roman Catholic Church installed Pope Benedict XVI she has sealed her fate for all eternity, and those who have eyes to see have seen it for themselves.

Since When Is Permanent Not Permanent?

Now let’s take a moment to consider the following from the **Second Vatican Council** held by the Church of Rome in the mid 1960’s. This would be some 30 *years* before Pope John Paul II would have “invited input from non-Catholic Christians on the primacy of the office of Peter.” Please look very carefully at the following quote from Lumen Gentium – “Solemnly Promulgated By Holiness Pope Paul VI On November 21, **1964**” –

just as the office granted individually to Peter, the first among the apostles **is permanent** and is to be transmitted to his successors, so also the apostles' office of nurturing the Church **is permanent**, and is to be exercised without interruption by the sacred order of bishops. (14*) Therefore, the Sacred Council teaches that bishops by divine institution **have succeeded to the place of the apostles**, (15*) as shepherds of the Church, and he who hears them, hears Christ, and **he who rejects them, rejects Christ** and Him who sent Christ. (149)(16*)(Lumen Gentium, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-i_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, copy on file, emphasis added).

We must ask ourselves an important question here. **If** – “the office granted individually to Peter, the first among the apostles is **permanent** and is to be transmitted to his successors” – then do we *really* think that Pope John Paul II had any actual intentions of changing this dogma, which is the very reason the Church of Rome exists–period?

Rather, it would appear that we have just seen the Lord bring to light the absolute truth of what Jesus says about *all* deceivers–religious or not:

Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known (Matthew 10:26). For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops (Luke 12:2-3).

Or in this case it seems they’ll be written about in an international publication such as *Christianity Today*.

And even in *Ut Unam Sint* Pope John Paul II himself said:

*I myself intend to promote every suitable initiative aimed at making the witness of the entire Catholic community understood in its full purity and consistency,... This is a **specific duty of the Bishop of Rome as the Successor of the Apostle Peter**. I carry out this duty with the profound conviction that I am obeying the Lord,...*
(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint_e_p.2, emphasis added, copy on file).

For those who have eyes to see, it’s not like the Church of Rome has ever really hidden her true intentions to bring **all** churches that would call themselves Christian back under the direct authority of her Pontiff.

The Roman Catholic Chameleon

It is at this juncture I’d like to remind you of something Dr. Walter Martin revealed about just how the Church of Rome truly operates here in the United States. As a recognized authority in the field of Comparative Religion, Martin brings out something that is extremely critical for us

to understand in trying to reach those who would consider themselves Roman Catholic:

You must understand what you are seeing in this country **is not pure Roman Catholic theology**. What you are seeing in this country **is a watered down version adapted to the American mind** so that the Americans will live with it. Rome is a great chameleon – she changes color on what ever surface you place her. Here in this country she cannot do the things she does in Spain and Italy and survive and so she is different. The face is different but **underneath the theology remains unchanged**. The statement [in 1964 by Pope Paul VI – “**nothing really changes in the traditional doctrine.**”] is true. They never change on the basics. They will change on the peripherals, [but] **never on the centrality**, the authority of the papacy” (Walter Martin, “Roman Catholicism - Part 2 of 3”, side 1, cassette #4011, Walter Martin’s Religious InfoNet).

Dr. Martin was indeed quite correct in his assessment of the Roman Catholic Church as the article in *Christianity Today* further verified. Protestant scholar and author Dr. Robert Morey, who also happens to be a former student of Martin’s, clues us in as to just why it is that the Church of Rome will never be reformed under any circumstances. Morey writes –

the Roman Catholic Church **cannot change its doctrines because it claims to be infallible in doctrine**. Thus if it ever admitted that it was in any way wrong on any doctrine, it could no longer claim to be infallible! Since Romanists **base their faith on the infallibility of the Pope and the Church**, no one can doubt or question Catholic dogma. While the Bible is mentioned as being one of the sources for its authority, the Roman Church is actually the only and final authority because it will allow only its interpretation of Scripture. Thus when a doctrine is in conflict with Scripture, **the Scripture is conformed to the doctrine!** (*Roman Catholicism Today*, www.faithdefenders.com/files/sermons/rc4.html, copy on file, emphasis added).

It would seem that Dr. Morey has finally solved the apparent “mystery” that so many Evangelical Protestants just *can’t* seem to figure out. Here now is the foremost reason why the Church of Rome couldn’t reform even if she wanted to. It’s the very doctrine of the papacy itself, because the **First Vatican Council** made the Pope infallible when he teaches on theology! This apostate man-made religious system of works–self-righteousness could never change without admitting that they really **aren’t** the one true Church on the face of the earth.

As such, do you still think that the Church of Rome has ever really had any intentions of reforming on her core theology during these many so-called ecumenical councils? The time has come for the Evangelical camp to awaken from our slumber, and for the Body of Christ en masse to publicly condemn this apostate religion once and for all.

To Be Protestant Is To Perpetually Protest Against The Church Of Rome

However, the Church hasn’t always been sleeping you know, consider this from Charles Haddon Spurgeon, widely known as the “Prince of Preachers,” who wrote an article for the *Sword and Trowel* in January of 1873 called “The Religion of Rome.” And in it he said:

Essence of lies, and quintessence of blasphemy, as the religion of Rome is, it nevertheless fascinates a certain order of Protestants, of whom we fear it may be truly said that “they have received a strong delusion to believe a lie, that they may be damned.” [Which you may know is a reference to 2 Thessalonians 2:11] Seeing that it is so, it becomes all who would preserve their fellow-immortals from destruction to be plain and earnest in their warnings. Not in a party-spirit, but **for truth’s sake, our Protestantism must protest perpetually**... (http://www.spurgeon.org/s_and_t/relrome.htm, emphasis added).

And then C.H. Spurgeon – “England’s best-known preacher for most of the second half of the nineteenth century” – a man mightily used by God—and who “frequently preached to audiences numbering more than 10,000—all in the days before electronic amplification” (<http://www.spurgeon.org/aboutsp.htm>) concluded:

The sooner we let certain Archbishops and Cardinals know that we are aware of their designs, and **will in nothing co-operate with them**, the better for us and our country. Of course, we shall be howled at as bigots, but we can afford to smile at that cry, when it comes from the church which invented the Inquisition. **“No peace with Rome” is the motto of reason as well as of religion**(*ibid.*).

Quite obviously this Evangelical Protestant—a veritable giant of a man in Christ—saw through *The Deceivers*. The question I'd like to ask Billy Graham and his growing horde ecumenical cohorts is: What has changed?

The Authority Of Rome

This is a good point of departure to shift into the next section of this message, which would be the source of religious authority for the Church of Rome. What does Roman Catholic theology teach in regard to how we know what God Himself has actually said to mankind. This really is the central issue for all theology because the only way man can ever know our Creator is if He chose to reveal Himself to us. Therefore the question becomes: Did God speak to man, and if so, do we know how and where He has spoken?

The following from Ankerberg and Weldon in their informative little booklet *The Facts On Roman Catholicism* will prove helpful here.

Roman Catholicism teaches that in addition to the Protestant Bible, there are five other sources having divine authority. First, there are additional books written between the Old and New Testament, known to [Roman] Catholics as the deuterocanonical books and to the Protestants by the term "apocrypha." Roman Catholics consider these books genuine Scripture and include them as part of their Bible. Second, [Roman] Catholicism maintains that divine authority is to be found in the authorized Tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, which is also classified as the "Word of God." Third, divine authority (infallibility) is given to the Pope when he speaks officially on matters of faith and morals. Fourth, when speaking or teaching in conjunction with the Pope and orthodox Catholic Tradition, Roman Catholic bishops - [known as the Magisterium] - are also held to be infallible, and hence, divinely authoritative. Finally, official Roman Catholic interpretation of the Bible ([Roman] Catholic teaching) is considered to have divine warrant and authority. In essence, all five of these sources can be summarized by the term "Roman Catholic Tradition" (pp.8,9).

As a matter of fact Pope John Paul II kindly confirms this for us himself in that encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* which we mentioned earlier. As he is discussing the ecumenical movement and the differences that still persist among churches that would call themselves Christian he informs us - "The examination of such disagreements has **two essential points of reference: Sacred Scripture and the great Tradition of the Church** [of Rome]. Catholics [also] have the help of the Church's living Magisterium" (pp., 15,16, emphasis added).

And for the Roman Catholic the source of religious authority actually works out—in order of importance—to be "the great Tradition of the Church [of Rome]—the [Roman] Church's living Magisterium" and then *their* own interpretation of that "Sacred Scripture."

Tradition Vs The Bible

Let me take a moment to point about something about "tradition" within the historic orthodox Christian Church, and you will see that the Protestant really need not fear this word. Here is 2 Thessalonians 3:6-7:

*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not **after the tradition which he received of us**. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;...*

It is important to understand that needn't shy away from the word "tradition" just because of the Church of Rome places such a heavy emphasis upon it. For a study of history shows that the early Church did indeed follow Apostolic traditions, many of which would later be incorporated as Holy Scripture itself.

The Greek word for "tradition" is **paradosis** meaning, "a handing down or on" (**Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary**, p.639) and "a giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing, i.e. tradition by instruction" (**Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon**, p.481). And **paradosis** can also carry the meaning, "that which is called along side." In his book **Early Christian Doctrines** noted historian Dr. J.N.D. Kelly informs us that:

by tradition the [Church] fathers usually mean doctrine which the Lord or His

apostles committed to the Church, irrespective of whether it was handed down orally or in documents,... The ancient meaning of the term is well illustrated by Athanasius's reference to "the actual original tradition, teaching and faith of the Catholic Church, which the Lord bestowed, the apostles proclaimed and the fathers safeguarded" (pp.30,31).

In the classic Bible commentary set **Jamieson-Fausett-Brown** we read:

traditions - [are] truths *delivered and transmitted* orally, or in writing (2Th 3:6; 1Co 11:2; *Greek*, "traditions"). The *Greek* verb from which the noun comes, is used by Paul in 1Co 11:23; 15:3. From the *three* passages in which "tradition" is used in a good sense, **Rome has argued for her accumulation of un-inspired traditions**, virtually overriding God's Word, [which they] put forward as of [co-equal,] **co-ordinate authority with** [the Bible]. She forgets the **ten** passages [of Scripture that rebuke] (Mt 15:2, 3, 6; Mr 7:3, 5, 8, 9, 13; Ga 1:14; Col 2:8) stigmatizing *man's un-inspired* traditions. Not even the apostles' sayings were all inspired (for example, Peter's dissimulation, Ga 2:11-14), but only when they claimed to be so, as in their words afterwards embodied in their canonical writings. Oral inspiration was necessary in their case, until the canon of the written Word should be complete; [and] they proved their possession of inspiration by miracles wrought in support of the new revelation, which revelation, moreover, accorded with the existing Old Testament revelation; an additional test needed besides miracles (compare De 13:1-6; Ac 17:11). When the canon was complete, **the infallibility of the living men was transferred to the written Word**, now the sole unerring guide, **interpreted by the Holy Spirit**. Little else has come down to us by the most *ancient* and *universal* **tradition** save this, the all-sufficiency of Scripture for salvation. Therefore, **by tradition, we are constrained to cast off all tradition not contained in, or not provable by, Scripture** (<http://www.ccel.org/j/jfb/jfb/JFB53.htm#Chapter2>, emphasis added).

And hence the Protestant doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*—the Bible alone—for **this** was the cry of the Reformers in the first place. While the Church of Rome continued to insist that the Church and its Pope were the infallible interpreters of Holy Scripture, Luther insisted that the Bible itself should be the source for all doctrine, thereby Holy Scripture was to interpret the Church *and* its traditions. As the late Evangelical Christian statesman Dr. Carl F.H. Henry has pointed out –

The Reformers affirmed the **full authority of the Bible**. They were prepared to accept in Catholic tradition only what Scripture authorizes. **The Catholic church rejected the Reformation emphasis on both the Bible alone** ("sola scriptura") and on faith alone ("sola fide"). It excommunicated Luther, who sought to remain in its ranks in the interest of reform,... (<http://www.equip.org/free/DC172.htm>, emphasis added).

This is once again going to be a most critical area for true Christians to come to grips with in the next few years now that the "traditions" of the Church Growth Movement are taking root, which is having the decidedly unpleasant effect of actually fueling the insidious ecumenical movement. The fact remains that Apostolic tradition categorically shows that the Bible should define and shape the doctrine of the Church, and *not* the reverse as it is with the Church of Rome, and with increasing numbers of seeker-sensitive mega-churches.

Even Evangelicals who are sympathetic to the Church of Rome as are Geisler and MacKenzie have correctly observed the critical issue:

One of the basic differences between Catholics and Protestants is over whether the Bible alone is the sufficient and final authority for faith and practice, or the Bible plus extrabiblical apostolic tradition. **Catholics further insist that there is a need for a teaching magisterium** (i.e., the Pope and their bishops) to rule on just what is and is not authentic apostolic tradition... Whether or not extrabiblical apostolic tradition is considered a second source of revelation, **there is no question that the Roman Catholic church holds that apostolic tradition is both authoritative and infallible...** [and] The Council of Trent emphatically proclaimed that **the Bible alone is not sufficient for faith and morals**. God has ordained tradition **in addition to the Bible** to faithfully guide the church (*WHAT THINK YE OF ROME? (Part Three)*,

<http://www.equip.org/free/DC170-3.htm>, emphasis added).

So let's sum up our look at the subject of "tradition" within Christianity. A tradition in the sense Paul was talking about in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 was actually referring to what he had been teaching them by word of mouth. What would come to be called "Apostolic tradition," and as we have seen much of which has been preserved right in the text of the Holy Scriptures.

However, the word tradition has also taken on a negative connotation because of how it has been twisted by the Church of Rome in an attempt to give credence to their extra-biblical dogmas, which are clearly **not** found anywhere in the Bible. For instance, let me share a few things—traditions—that Roman Catholicism is responsible for.

The Church Of Rome Has Evolved Over Time

Dr. Loraine Boettner brings out an interesting fact in his classic book **Roman Catholicism**

One of the first things that we want to point out in this study is that **the Roman Catholic Church has not always been** what it is today. Rather, it has reached its present state as the result of a long, slow process of development as **through the centuries one new doctrine, or ritual, or custom after another has been added**. Even a superficial reading of the following list will make - [it is] - clear that **most of the distinctive features of the system were unknown to Apostolic Christianity**, and that one can hardly recognize in present day Romanism the original Christian doctrines (p.7, emphasis added).

Dr. Boettner then gives us "Some Roman Catholic Heresies And Inventions" and the dates that these alleged "Apostolic" traditions were **added** to Roman Catholic theology –

- * *Prayers for the dead*, began about A.D. 300
- * Making the *sign of the cross* 300
- * *Veneration of angels and dead saints*, and use of *images* 375
- * **The Mass**, as a daily celebration 394
- * *Beginning of the exaltation of Mary*, the term "Mother of God" - first applied to her by the Council of Ephesus 431
- * Priests began to dress differently from laymen 500
- * Extreme Unction 526 * **The doctrine of Purgatory**, established by Gregory I 593
- * *Latin* used in prayer and worship, imposed by Gregory I 600
- * **Prayer directed to Mary**, dead saints and angels, about 600
- * **Title of pope**, or universal bishop, given to Boniface III 607
- * *Kissing the pope's foot*, began with pope Constantine 709
- * *Worship of the cross, images and relics*, authorized in 786
- * *Holy water*, mixed with a pinch of salt and blessed by a priest 850
- * *Canonization of dead saints*, first by pope John XV 995
- * **The Mass, developed gradually as a sacrifice, attendance made obligatory in the 11th century**
- * *Celibacy* of the priesthood, decreed by pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand) 1079
- * **The Rosary**, mechanical praying with beads, invented by Peter the Hermit 1090
- * *Sale of Indulgences* 1190
- * **Transubstantiation**, proclaimed by pope Innocent III 1215
- * *Auricular Confession* of sins to a priest instead of to God, instituted by pope Innocent III, in Lateran Council 1215
- * **Bible forbidden to laymen**, placed on the Index of Forbidden Books by the Council of Valencia 1229
- * **Purgatory proclaimed** a dogma by Council of Florence 1439
- * The doctrine of **Seven Sacraments** affirmed 1439
- * **Tradition** declared of equal authority with the Bible by the **Council of Trent** 1545
- * *Apocryphal books* added to the Bible by the Council of Trent 1546
- * **Immaculate Conception** of the Virgin Mary, proclaimed by pope Pius IX 1854
- * **Syllabus of Errors**, proclaimed by pope Pius IX, and ratified by the Vatican Council; condemned freedom of religion, conscience, speech, press, and scientific discoveries which are disapproved by the Roman Church; asserted the pope's temporal authority over all civil rulers 1864
- * **Infallibility of the pope** in matters of faith and morals, proclaimed by the Vatican Council 1870

- * *Public Schools* condemned by pope Pius XI 1930
- * **Assumption of the Virgin Mary** (bodily ascension into heaven shortly after her death), proclaimed by pope Pius XII 1950
- * **Mary proclaimed Mother of the Church**, by pope Paul VI 1965

And then Dr. Boettner concludes:

Add to these many others: monks – nuns – monasteries – convents – forty days Lent – holy week – Palm Sunday – Ash Wednesday – All Saints day – Candlemas day – fish day – meat days – incense – holy oil – holy palms – Christopher medals – charms – novenas – and still others.

There you have it – **the melancholy evidence of Rome's steadily increasing departure from the simplicity of the Gospel**, a departure so radical and far-reaching at the present time (1965) that it has produced a drastically anti-evangelical church. **It is clear beyond possibility of doubt that the Roman Catholic religion as now practiced is the outgrowth of centuries of error.** Human inventions have been **substituted for Bible truth** and practice. Intolerance and arrogance have replaced the love and kindness and tolerance that were the distinguishing qualities of the first century Christians, so that now **in Roman Catholic countries** Protestants and others who are **sincere believers in Christ but who do not acknowledge the authority of the pope are subject to all kinds of restrictions** and in some cases even forbidden to practice their religion. The distinctive attitude of **the present day Roman Church was fixed largely by the Council of Trent** (1545-1563), with its more than 100 anathemas or curses pronounced against all who then or in the future would dare to differ with its decisions.

Think what all of this means! Each of the above doctrines or practices can be pin-pointed to the exact or approximate date at which it became a part of the system. And no single one of them became a part of the system until **centuries after the time of Christ!** Most of these doctrines and practices are binding on all Roman Catholics, for they have been **proclaimed by a supposedly infallible pope** or church council. To deny any doctrine or practice so proclaimed involves one in mortal sin.

What will be next? Indications are that it will be another proclamation concerning **Mary**. Two new doctrines are under discussion: **Mary as Mediatrix, and Mary as Co-redemptrix**. Important Roman Catholic authorities have already indicated that these will be the next doctrines officially proclaimed. Mary is being presented in current Roman teaching as a Mediator along with Christ. She is said to be the 'Mediatrix of all graces,' and the people are being told that the way to approach Christ is through His mother. "To Christ through Mary," is the slogan. **Her images outnumber those of Christ, and more prayer is offered to her than to Christ** (pp. 7-9, emphasis added, copy on file).

This is by no means an exhaustive list of myriad additions to the professed Christian faith of the Church of Rome but the point has certainly been made, these dogmas—no matter how pious they might seem—could *not* possibly have been sanctioned by the God of the Bible. You'll notice Dr. Boettner, writing in the early 1960's, pointed out that two "new doctrines" that were then "under discussion" involving Mary. Since Boettner wrote those words both of these—Mary as Co-Mediatrix and Co-Redemptrix—are now Roman Catholic dogma.-

There's no real pleasure in pointing these things out but it has to be done. And frankly, I'm only doing something that more of our Evangelical leaders **should** also have been doing all along. When we look at this evidence—much like one would in a court of law—it is simply beyond any question of a doubt that the Church of Rome considers herself as *the* one universal katholikos Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The One True Church?

Read it for yourself, here is the **Code of Canon Law**:

Art. 1. **THE ROMAN PONTIFF** Can. 331 **The bishop of the Roman Church**, in whom continues the office **given by the Lord uniquely to Peter**, the first of the Apostles, **and to be transmitted** to his successors, is the head of the college of

bishops, **the Vicar of Christ**, and **the pastor of the universal Church on earth**
(http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/___P16.HTM, emphasis added).

However, after all the rhetoric finally dies down, what everyone needs to keep in mind is that no matter how religious the Church of Rome might appear to be, the truth is that the Roman Catholic Church must also preach the *same* Gospel as Paul and the other Apostles of our Lord. For the Bible tells us that if someone preaches a gospel **other** the one preached by Christ's original Apostles they are to be eternally condemned. And it is an incontrovertible fact that the "gospel" preached by the apostate Church of Rome is indeed another gospel; a gospel—which God the Holy Spirit tells us cogently in Galatians 1:7 – *is not another*.

You might find it interesting that what is really at stake here can be better grasped by a more thorough understanding of the great love of our merciful God. For years contemporary Christianity has been dominated by the Arminian concept of mankind's so-called "free will," coupled with a corresponding lack of emphasis concerning the absolute sovereignty of God, so that people have come to believe that we are such delightful creatures that our Creator just can't help but love us.

But the Bible is quite clear when it says – *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life* (Roman 5:10). It isn't until you realize that while we considered God *our* enemy – by His grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone – *we were reconciled to Him*. Though unregenerate man hates our Creator, He still made a way for us to be saved, and *that's* how great the love of our merciful God is! Herein lies the real reason why the Lord hates our **self**-righteousness even though He most certainly does love His chosen mankind.

The very bottom line in this Protestant–Roman Catholic debate is this: **Anything** that man adds to Christ's Gospel issues from our self-ish nature—our pride—which is what separated us from our Lord in the first place. This must never be forgotten under any circumstances because this is also exactly why God the Son—Christ Jesus of Nazareth—was to be nailed to that Cross in the first place. And there can be no doubt that crucifixion is the single most torturous and excruciatingly painful death ever devised by man. In fact, the very word **excruciate** was coined just to try and describe the indescribably horrible pain associated with being crucified.

Let me share a last little bit of insight on the subject of the innate pride of mankind from Dr. John MacArthur who says:

If I can make the point solidly, to borrow the language of the Apostle Paul; any attempt at self-righteousness, no matter how noble the effort, no matter how frequently the "God" vocabulary is used and the divine is brought into it—any attempt at self-righteousness, Paul classifies as "skubalon" (Greek), in Philippians 3. That word is about as vivid a word as he could possibly use. It could be translated "rubbish"—the most accurate translation is "dung."

When you talk about a work-righteousness system, of any kind, it is so far from saving that it is rubbish, it's garbage. That's why Paul said, "All my life" he said, "I tried to achieve this stuff, and I had all this stuff in my gain column," remember that in Philippians 3? "And then I saw Christ, and a righteousness which came not by the law, but a righteousness was given to me by faith—the righteousness of God and immediately all what was gained was "skubalon."

What you have got [in Roman Catholicism] is a whole system built on "skubalon" and you can't throw your arms around that system. You can't embrace it, and simply say, "Well, they talk about Jesus, and they talk about God, and they talk about faith, and they talk about grace, and we have got to embrace them. And if we don't embrace them then we are violating the unity of the Body, and we are being ungracious to other disciples." [No – because that] is a frightening mis-representation of the distinctiveness of "Justification by faith, and faith alone" (*Irreconcilable Differences: Catholics, Evangelicals, and the New Quest for Unity*, **The John Ankerberg Show**, transcript on file).

Stand For The True Gospel

I close this appeal with some solemn words for our Evangelical leaders, that in the Spirit still ring just as true today, as when God the Holy Spirit inspired His Apostle Paul to write them

about the Judaizers of the first century. Like the Church of Rome today with their self-righteous "Sacraments of the New Law," those of the circumcision group in Paul's day, also added "conditions" – works – considered essential to salvation. And the LORD God Almighty–Who does not change said:

*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; 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. 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.***

He who has ears to hear...then let Him hear what the Lord has said to the churches...and obey Him...for to obey...is better than sacrifice...amen...

Posted by Ken at September 2, 2005 09:42 PM
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