

The Mindset of Catholicism Permeating Evangelicalism

By Richard Bennett

Many Evangelicals in our day know little of what the true Gospel really means. As a result, many New Evangelicals have embraced Roman Catholic ways of thinking. On May 30, 2004, the *New York Times* carried news of the alliance called “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” (ECT) showing it as a movement that is changing the face of Christianity. Timothy George, a former leading Reformed man of the Southern Baptist Founders Movement, fully endorsed ECT. He has also written about ECT and has endeavored to implement its theology. His influence was especially seen after a conference he gave for John Armstrong for what had been a well-known magazine and Website called “Reformation and Revival.” The outcome of the conference was a total change in the theological position of John Armstrong’s *Reformation and Revival* magazine and website. It has now espoused the mindset of Papal Rome. The ministry also has a new name; it is called “ACT 3.”¹ The name is explained as, “Advancing the Christian Tradition in the Third Millennium.” The Website states, “From the Beginning we have emphasized equipping leadership for the Church that is faithful to Scripture **and tradition** and rooted in piety and grace.”² This is a primary statement showing the mindset of Papal Rome. The Vatican does not accept Scripture as final authority in all matters of faith and morals. Rather Papal Rome decrees, “Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture are bound closely together and communicate one with the other.”³ This frame of mind is permeating other movements such as “Christian Churches Together,” the “New Perspective,” “The Coming Home Network,” and “The Emerging Church movement.” Since in Scripture there is only one basis of truth for the Lord’s people, this foundational mindset of Catholicism, together with other of their basic beliefs, must be analyzed.

Rome’s Mindset on the Basis of Truth

The first and foundational mindset of Papal Rome is the acceptance of their tradition as being equivalent to Scripture. Officially, the Vatican states, “Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.”⁴ In practice, more and more new evangelical churches work from a similar basis. These churches are flooded with strategies borrowed from tenets of psychology and methods of the business world to make up for what they see as an insufficiency of Scripture. Thus, the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture is undermined by the presupposition that the Bible is insufficient in our postmodern culture. In these churches, experience is treasured over the absolute truth of Scripture. Assent is given to belief in the Scripture; however, the New Evangelical standard line that doctrine is not necessary because it is divisive negates this belief. The traditions of new evangelical churches are different than Rome’s. The mindset, however, is basically the same. To answer both, we proclaim what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself declared, “*the Scripture cannot be broken,*” “*Sanctify them by thy truth: Thy word is truth.*”⁵ God’s Word not only contains the truth but also is truth itself. This is consistent with the declarations throughout the Old Testament in which the Holy Spirit continually proclaimed that the revelation from God is truth. The Lord Himself identified truth with the

¹ <http://www.act3online.com>

² <http://www.act3online.com/passionforthechurch.asp> Emphasis not in original

³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), Para 80

⁴ *Catechism*, Para 82

⁵ John 10:35; John 17:17

written Word. There is no source other than written Scripture alone to which the statement, “*thy word is truth.*” can apply. On that source alone, the Scripture is the believer’s standard of truth.

Rome’s Mindset on the Moral Status of Man

The mindset especially evident in Catholicism is its teaching on the moral condition of the individual needing reconciliation with God. Papal Rome officially teaches,

“... Nevertheless man has been **wounded by sin**. He finds by experience that his body is in revolt. His very dignity therefore requires that he should glorify God in his body, and not allow it to serve the evil inclinations of his heart... When he is drawn to think about his real self he turns to those deep recesses of his being where God who probes the heart awaits him, and **where he himself decides his own destiny in the sight of God.**”⁶

The Vatican stresses it is due to an individual’s own human dignity that one comes to decide one’s own destiny in the sight of God. This mindset is now common with New Evangelicals. For them, man is free and able to obey, repent, and believe. Billy Graham Evangelistic Association expresses it in the following words, “Man is in sin, rebellion, and separation from God, yet he is still able to obey, repent, believe, and invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life.”⁷ Also the evangelistic organization called NavPress, a division of The Navigators, states the same claim in the words, “Everyone must decide individually whether to receive Christ.”⁸ How this is lived out is repeatedly seen. For example, *Charisma* magazine reported, “Since February 2007, the pastor of Revival Ministries International... has taken his Great Awakening Tour... mobilizing churchgoers to evangelize their communities. So far, the ministry has registered more than 950,000 decisions for Christ.”⁹ Thus New Evangelicals, presupposing the moral capability of a person to choose Christ for salvation, keep statistics just like in the sports world where statisticians count goals, home runs, and touchdowns. New Evangelicals have a fascination to count and make known the number of so-called free-will decisions for Christ.

In contrast, the Scripture states clearly the moral condition of a person before conversion, “*and you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*”¹⁰ Because of Adam’s sin, mankind is born spiritually dead. Scripture unequivocally lays bare the unsaved person’s heart, “*As it is written, ‘there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God.’*”¹¹ This is totally opposite to the mindset of Papal Rome and of modern evangelistic associations. If we are genuine Christians, it is because God chose us in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world.¹² He freely chose us, not because He foresaw that we would believe, but because it pleased Him to so choose. Thus, all the glory and praise belong to Him alone. We have no ground for boasting about free-will decisions because all who believe

⁶ Vatican Council II Document No. 64, *Gaudium et Spes*, in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Austin Flannery, Editor (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co, 1975) Vol. I, Sec. 14, p. 915 Emphasis not in original.

⁷ “Steps to Peace with God” pamphlet, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

⁸ “Bridge to Life” pamphlet by NavPress 1969. NavPress is a division of The Navigators.

⁹ <http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/news/20728-nearly-1-million-saved-in-great-awakening-tour>

¹⁰ Ephesians 2:1

¹¹ Romans 3:10-11

¹² Ephesians 1:4

have “*believed through grace.*”¹³ Our coming to faith in Jesus Christ is solely by grace “*otherwise grace is no more grace.*”¹⁴

Rome’s Mindset Denying Justification by Faith Alone and Baptismal Regeneration

The mindset of Papal Rome on Baptismal Regeneration has recently begun to permeate Evangelicalism. The Roman Church officially teaches, “Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life... Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God... ‘Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word.’”¹⁵ This concept is now evident in the Reformed and Presbyterian world with a well-known pastor, Doug Wilson, who leads a movement called the Auburn Avenue Theology.¹⁶ He is joined by other influential Presbyterian pastors, such as Steve Wilkins and Steve Schlissel, who advocate the new birth in Christ Jesus by means of the waters of baptism. Thus, Doug Wilson states, “Baptism is our introduction to union with Him,”¹⁷ and “while we do not take the connection between water baptism and grace and salvation as an absolute, we do take it as the norm.”¹⁸ In the New Testament there is an absolute connection between the Spirit and the Word of God but not between physical water and grace. Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ said, “*the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*”¹⁹ Coming to new birth in the New Testament is by the Holy Spirit through the instrument of God’s Word. Thus, the Apostle Peter proclaims, “*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*”²⁰ Consistently, and absolutely, in the teaching of Christ Jesus and the Apostles, sinful people receive the Spirit simply by the hearing of faith. By this hearing of faith we are brought into union with Christ. But Steve Wilkins of the Auburn Avenue movement teaches a conditional union with Christ based on the believer’s own faithfulness. He states, “The elect are those who are faithful in Christ Jesus. If they later reject the Savior, they are no longer elect.”²¹

What we document is just the top of the iceberg of what is now a massive movement both inside Presbyterian Reformed circles and beyond in what is called “The New Perspective on Paul.” This movement requires articles, and even books, to explain its many ramifications.²² However, in a nutshell, it holds that the believer’s faithfulness in living his faith is an essential part of his justification before God. The most notable proponent of the New Perspective is the U. K. scholar N.T. Wright, the Bishop of Durham. Wright denies the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer. He writes, “If we use the language of the law court, it makes no sense whatever to say that the judge imputes, imparts, bequeaths, conveys or otherwise transfers his righteousness to either the plaintiff or defendant.”²³ In Wright’s view, “righteousness” is covenant membership, so justification is simply God’s declaration that certain people are within

¹³ Acts 18:27

¹⁴ Romans 11:6

¹⁵ *Catechism*, Para. 1213

¹⁶ Going back the Auburn Avenue Presbyterian Church (PCA) conference in 2002 when Steve Schlissel, Doug Wilson, Steve Wilkins, and John Barach sought to redefine reformed doctrine.

¹⁷ Douglas Wilson, *Reformed is Not Enough* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003) p 168.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 105

¹⁹ John 6:63

²⁰ I Peter 1:23

²¹ Steve Wilkins & Duane Garner, *The Federal Vision* (Monroe, LA: Athanasius Press, 2004) Ch. II, “Covenant, Baptism, and Salvation”, pp. 56-58

²² A summary is given on our article and DVD called “Evangelicals Embark to Papal Rome”

²³ N.T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997) p. 98

the covenant. “Faith” for Wright is the believer’s faithfulness to Jesus Christ as Lord, leading to a final justification in the future. This analysis of justification by the believer’s faithfulness does not demand sacramentalism, but it is compatible with it. In fact, Wright writes that this view of justification is “a doctrine which Catholic[s] and Protestant[s] might just be able to agree on, as a result of hard ecumenical endeavor.”²⁴ He further writes, “Because what matters is believing in Jesus, detailed agreement on justification itself, properly conceived, isn’t the thing which should determine eucharistic fellowship.”²⁵ This redefinition of justification, then, can be compatible with Catholicism and has become more and more attractive to the nominally Reformed.

But Guy Prentiss Waters, who has written carefully against the arguments of the proponents of the New Perspective on Paul says, “If we examine their arguments carefully we see that what they are *really and increasingly* saying is that Luther and Calvin were mistaken, and that Trent was right.”²⁶ The thesis of the New Perspective on Paul, denying imputation of Christ’s righteousness, and emphasizing covenant faithfulness leading to final justification, removes the truth of the Gospel and leads to the embracing of Roman Catholicism. This claimed believer’s faithfulness to Jesus Christ as Lord, leading to justification, is the same as the “merit” that Papal Rome teaches within the same context of grace and justification. Rome states, “We can have merit in God’s sight only because of God’s free plan to associate man with the work of his grace.”²⁷ Both deny the imputation of Christ’s righteousness by faith alone; namely, (1) the New Perspective thesis explicitly as we saw with N.T. Wright, and (2) Rome also overtly, as justification is claimed to make us inwardly just by the sacrament of baptism. Thus, the Catholic Church officially states, “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.”²⁸

In total contrast, the absolute word of God consistently proclaims that justification is solely by God’s grace. Through God’s power, every individual who is saved is “*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*”²⁹ Justification is imputed, counted, or reckoned as one believes on Christ, as Scripture states, “*to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*”³⁰ Justification is “*not of works, lest any man should boast.*”³¹ Similarly, when the Jews asked Jesus what they should do to work the works of God, He responded, “*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*”³² Due to The New Perspective and its Auburn Avenue Theology offshoot there are many who denied the imputation of Christ’s righteousness by faith alone.³³ Auburn Avenue Theology and its followers even embrace Papal Rome’s teaching of

²⁴ Ibid., p. 158

²⁵ Ibid., p. 159

²⁶ Guy Prentiss Waters, *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2004) p. 212

²⁷ *Catechism*, under the general heading “Grace and Justification”, Para. 2025.

²⁸ *Catechism*, Para. 1992

²⁹ Romans 3:24 Romans 4:5

³⁰ Romans 4:5 see also Romans 4:9, 4:11, 4:22-25, and Psalm 106

³¹ Ephesians 2:9

³² John 6:29

³³ These are also led by men such as E.P. Sanders, a professor now at Duke University, who wrote *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977) and James D. G. Dunn of Durham University, England, who coined the term, “the New Perspective,” and incorporated into his commentary on Romans that Augustine and Luther had misread Paul.

baptismal regeneration. Thus, again the mindset of Papal Rome is being infused into Evangelicalism.

Rome's Mindset on Internal Righteousness

On being right with God, the Vatican teaches that justification is internal, that is, within the heart of the individual. Thus, as we have seen, she teaches, "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."³⁴

Papal Rome's teaching that a person is "inwardly just" is the opposite of what Scripture consistently teaches. Scripture teaches that a believer's justification is solely in Jesus Christ.³⁵ For example, the Apostle Paul declared, "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*"³⁶ Nonetheless, many New Evangelicals have accepted the mindset of Papal Rome that our right standing with God is within ourselves. The New Evangelicals hold this presupposition because they believe that salvation is a result of an individual's self-initiated, personal decision and desire to invite Jesus Christ to come into his or her heart. In 2004 the Billy Graham website stated it this way,

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me (Revelation 3:20). Jesus Christ wants to have a personal relationship with you. Picture, if you will, Jesus Christ standing at the door of your heart (the door of your emotions, intellect and will). Invite Him in; He is waiting for you to receive Him into your heart and life."³⁷

Another well-known evangelistic ministry, Campus Crusade for Christ International, claims that "New Birth" comes into a person's life by invitation. They state, "When We Receive Christ, We Experience a New Birth We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation. [Christ speaking] 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him.'"³⁸ However, new birth in Scripture is totally the work of the Holy Spirit and not by the invitation of a person.

The Lord Himself proclaimed, "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"³⁹ What He calls "*born again*" He explains as, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*"⁴⁰ True believers are, "*...born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*"⁴¹ The Spirit of God's unique work in applying Christ's redemption to the sinner is utterly clear and profound. In spite of the clarity of Scripture, that "*it is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing,*"⁴² Papal Rome and much of the evangelistic world believe in sacraments and

³⁴ *Catechism*, Para. 1992 Emphasis not in original.

³⁵ 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; Ephesians 1:6; Colossians 2:10, 3:3; II Peter 1:1, and elsewhere.

³⁶ II Corinthians 5:21

³⁷ From, "How to Know That Christ Is in Your Life" posted on the Billy Graham Website in 2004

³⁸ <http://www.ccci.org/wij/index.aspx> 6/9/2009 The text further states that you receive Christ by faith, an act of your will.

³⁹ John 3:3

⁴⁰ John 3:6

⁴¹ John 1:13

⁴² John 6:63

empty rituals. The “new birth” is called the turning point in the evangelistic ritual. However, in most cases in the evangelistic world, there is no real difference morally before and after the experience. In much of the New Evangelical world, the term “carnal Christian” is applied to those who have completed the procedure or ritualistic invitation but whose lives have not changed. Here the New Evangelicals go a bit beyond the Catholics, for it is claimed that “carnal Christians” have simply made Christ their Savior and need not make Him their Lord. This rationale is absurd, as no one makes Christ either Savior or Lord!

The location of salvation for Catholics is in their good works starting with infant baptism, balanced against their bad deeds. The location of the New Evangelicals’ salvation is in their own good works, starting with their invitational rituals. In contrast the location of a believer’s salvation is totally secure and totally glorious; it is in Christ, the Beloved. *“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved.”*⁴³ The supreme and conclusive purpose is immediately added, that all is to the glorious praise of His abundant grace. In having scorned God’s grace, the mindset of the Catholic Church and her evangelistic followers endeavors to rob the glory of salvation from the Lord God Almighty. All that is necessary to secure our salvation is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. There is a completion in Him that leaves nothing wanting; as Scripture proclaims, *“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”*⁴⁴

Rome’s Influential Mindset on Use of Images

The Church of Rome encourages both the making and the using of images. Idolatry was taken very seriously during the history of the Christian Church. There were very few images in the Church before the fourth century. The debate on images became prominent in the “iconoclastic controversy” of the eighth century, resulting in the Second Council of Nicea, which approved of pictures being kissed and honored in churches (787 A.D.). The Second Council of Nicea is reaffirmed in the present day *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Officially the Vatican states,

“The Christian veneration of images is **not contrary to the first commandment which proscribes idols.**⁴⁵ Indeed, the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype, and **whoever venerates an image venerates the person portrayed in it.** The honor paid to sacred images is a ‘respectful veneration,’ not the adoration due to God alone.”⁴⁶

They have clearly stated that God now approves image worship because the honor rendered to the image passed to its prototype. Indeed, in the same passage the *Catechism* states,

“Religious worship is not directed to images in themselves, considered as mere things, but under their distinctive aspect as **images leading us on to God incarnate. The movement toward the image does not terminate in it as image, but tends toward that whose image it is.**”

The basis for the Roman Catholic Church’s claim that idol worship does not countermand the commandment on idolatry is that, “...in the old Testament, God ordained or permitted the making of images that pointed symbolically toward salvation by the incarnate Word: so it was with

⁴³ Ephesians 1:6

⁴⁴ Colossians 2:10

⁴⁵ The Catholic Church puts the first two commandments of the Decalogue together but splits the commandment on covetousness into two parts.

⁴⁶ *Catechism*, Para. 2132 Emphasis not in original.

the bronze serpent, the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim.”⁴⁷ In citing the bronze serpent, the Ark of the Covenant, and the cherubim, the Catholic Church has made a serious error—for these items were neither images of God nor touted to be so. Since the Second Commandment was in force, clearly the Israelites were not to use the bronze serpent as an object of idolatrous worship, which later generations did, and for this reason God destroyed it.⁴⁸

The *Catechism*, however, continues to expand on the idea that images of “Jesus” point “symbolically toward salvation by the incarnate Word.” But their argument fails to comprehend that God does not contradict Himself, so that making and bowing down—which means essentially rendering honor or “veneration”—to images of the Divine is still forbidden. Under the rubric of an historical authority for their position, they state, “Basing itself on the mystery of the incarnate Word, the **seventh ecumenical council at Nicea (787) justified...the veneration of icons**—of Christ, but also of the Mother of God, the angels, and all the saints. **By becoming incarnate, the Son of God introduced a new ‘economy’ of images.**”⁴⁹ This paragraph of the *Catechism* stands in direct opposition to the Apostle Paul’s preaching to the Athenians on Mars Hill on the very issue of idolatry—an incident that happened years after the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle stated, “*Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent....*”⁵⁰ These post-Incarnation idolaters were commanded to repent of their idolatry and believe the Gospel. However, the Catholic authorities count their human rationalization of greater authority than God’s written Word.

The same Apostle also explained how idolatry corrupts a man when he foolishly starts using images to stand for God, in fact, describing how idolaters, including the idol-makers, have corrupted the world,

*“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and **changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: Who **changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.**”***⁵¹

The Apostles went everywhere preaching that God sent His Son to save the world from sin, including from idolatry and its consequences. The Apostle Paul states very clearly that the Lord Jesus Christ is now no more known after the flesh.⁵² The Apostles, although having seen the Lord Jesus, never described what He looked like. They proclaimed what He said and what He did. They emphasized His death and resurrection, explaining what those events mean and how we must believe on His death and resurrection to be saved. They taught people that Christ Jesus Himself is the image of God in heaven. This is because God is only bodily portrayed in Christ

⁴⁷ *Catechism*, Para. 2130

⁴⁸ II Kings 18:3-4 They use the same logic regarding the Ark of the Covenant and the cherubim.

⁴⁹ *Catechism*, Para. 2131 Emphasis not in original.

⁵⁰ Acts 17:29-30

⁵¹ Romans 1:22-25

⁵² II Corinthians 5:15-16

Jesus the Lord, who is “*the express image of his person.*”⁵³ The entire nature and character of God is shown forth perfectly in the Lord Christ Jesus. This is made clear by what the Apostles taught the Church.

Idolatry Paraded as Christian

In spite of the clarity of Scripture, the evangelical camp, to a very great extent, accepts Papal Rome’s mindset on the use of idolatry. Images of Christ are widely used in some evangelical circles. In promoting expression of subjective experience rather than sound teaching of Biblical doctrine, new modes of teaching are required. Pictures communicate the message that Christ is other than the Biblical God Who cannot be pictured. Some evangelical churches base evangelism, education, and worship upon those forbidden pictures, i.e., the “JESUS” film, flannel graph storytelling techniques, etcetera. Sunday school curricula associate a man-made picture of “Christ” with the LORD. The pictures become accepted as a portrayal of Christ; they become the Christ *de facto*. Doctrine is subverted, authority is silently wrested from the Bible. Thus almost any concept of Christ becomes acceptable. This has laid the groundwork for an unbiblical, ecumenical church in which anyone who has accepted any type of imagined christ is purportedly a Christian. For example, “The Jesus Film Project,” a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, states the following,

“Since 1979 the ‘Jesus’ film has been viewed by several **billion** people all across the globe, and has resulted in more than **225 million** men, women and children indicating decisions to follow Jesus. Based on the Gospel of Luke, the ‘Jesus’ film has now been translated into more than 1,050 languages, with a new language being added nearly every week. This brings God’s Word to people in more than 220 countries in languages they know and understand.”⁵⁴

Besides this, in so-called Christian bookstores and across the Internet, **pictures and photographs** of Jesus and Mary are marketed. For example, you read,

“In this website you will find many photographs depicting Jesus and the Virgin Mary. They were collected on the web and they're allegedly authentic, it is a miraculous phenomenon **occurring worldwide**. Every photograph is accompanied by a brief description and the link to the source site where it was found. Click on photographs to bring up a larger version.”⁵⁵

Many Evangelicals demonstrate an ignorance of the meaning of the Second Commandment, which forbids using images to represent God.”⁵⁶ This commandment prohibits the creation and use of graven images. It essentially brings to mind that God is a Spirit, not to be conceived of or fashioned in man’s image, or any other creature’s. In the book of Deuteronomy the Second Commandment is further explained, “*And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw **no similitude**; only ye heard a voice... Take ye therefore*

⁵³ Hebrews 1:3 “*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*”

⁵⁴ <http://www.jesusthroughfilm.org/> 6/10/2009 Emphasis not in original.

⁵⁵ <http://jesusphotos.altervista.org/> 6/10/2009 Emphasis not in original.

⁵⁶ “*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments*” Exodus 20:4-6

*good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, **the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female...***⁵⁷ What is forbidden is to make a similitude of God Himself. No similitude of the Divine was given to the people and none was to be made. In the New Testament we see that no “similitude” of Christ Jesus was given and none is to be made. The commandment must remain unabridged. Any similitude or image of Father, Son, or Holy Spirit is sinful and insulting to the majesty of the Lord God. Many Evangelicals are on the Roman road of idolatry, oblivious to the fact that it lies parallel to the Greek Orthodox route.⁵⁸ The Scripture clearly shows that it is a transgression of God’s law to make a “representation” or “semblance” of anything in heaven, or upon the earth, to delineate God. He calls those who break this commandment “*those who hate me,*”⁵⁹ and those who keep the commandment, “*those who love me.*”⁶⁰ Punishment for iniquity is promised to the transgressors. He declares, “*for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.*”⁶¹

Our Response

Many of the major evangelical institutions have openly joined in company with the Roman Catholic Church in false ecumenical movements such as “Evangelicals and Catholics Together.” It appears that the Lord is now abandoning much of the evangelical leadership to the consequences of their corrupt and anti-biblical opinions. Modern evangelicals, at ease in Zion, have neglected to read the overtures of false ecumenism propagated by Vatican Council II documents. They have preferred to have fellowship with “*the unfruitful works of darkness,*”⁶² which is being unmistakably manifested in ecumenical apostasy. Continued dialogue and discourse with the Roman Catholic Church is becoming their undoing.⁶³ In sanctioning the Roman Catholic system as “Christian,” and accepting her major mindsets, they have publicly denied the distinctive character of salvation in, service to, and worship of the one true and living God of the Bible. Now, sadly, this false ecumenism is rapidly advancing even though there are a few fearless Christian leaders who are strongly taking a stand against it. In this regard, we urge you to make your voice heard through preaching and teaching, as well as across the Internet.

In our own time, it can be shown quite easily that most church attendees in evangelical churches cannot state correctly what the biblical doctrine of “justification by faith” means. This appalling lack of biblical knowledge and understanding makes one very concerned for the salvation of many. Therefore, we have the need for this conference on “Reviving the Lost Art of Evangelistic Proclamation.” As mindset of Papal Rome permeates Evangelicalism we have reached a watershed period of time. 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 con-

⁵⁷ Deuteronomy 4:12-16

⁵⁸ The Greek Orthodox honor and kiss icons. These are pictures and not statues. They state “use of icons was defended and upheld at the Seventh Ecumenical Council. The end of that council is still celebrated as the ‘Triumph of Orthodoxy’ in today, and icons remain a central part of Orthodox faith and practice.” http://www.fact-index.com/e/ea/eastern_orthodoxy.html

⁵⁹ Exodus 20:5

⁶⁰ Exodus 20:6

⁶¹ Exodus 20:5

⁶² Ephesians 5:11

⁶³ See “The Alignment of New Evangelicals with Apostasy” by Richard Bennett. <http://www.bereanbeacon.org>

taminated with any other gospel.⁶⁴ Therefore, those who truly are truly Christian must separate themselves, not only from the Church of Rome and her ways of thinking, but also must separate themselves from so-called Evangelicals who have accepted her mindsets and who work out of similar bases themselves. It is for us to fear the All Holy God and obey his commandment to “*stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*”⁶⁵

The world in our day is as the Apostle John wrote, “*in the power of the evil one.*”⁶⁶ Timothy George, John Armstrong, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Campus Crusade for Christ, Doug Wilson, Steve Wilkins are just a few of the prominent Evangelicals persons and groups that have publicly denied the Gospel by endorsing the terms and erroneous doctrinal concepts of the Church of Rome. The Holy Spirit strongly warns of the apocalyptic consequences of these deceptions and of the judgment of those who promote lies in the name of God.⁶⁷ The Lord will search out and try the visible Church. He will discover and detect those who say they are Evangelical believers and are not, but who carry on with the mind and convictions of Papal Rome. He who punished the sinners in Zion with great severity warns the believers of the New Testament times that He will be even more severe.⁶⁸

What we must remember is that, for the Lord God, the sanctification of His People is His first priority. Only a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our time, to turn the hearts of His people back to Him, will be a sufficient remedy. Pray then that the Lord may be pleased in mercy to heal the spiritual blindness that plagues the contemporary Evangelical Church rather than to permit it run further into darkness. It is mercy for which we are praying. Given the pattern of stubborn and sinful rebellion manifest in these last years it is certain that the Evangelical Church deserves nothing but a severe punishment from His hand. This is no time to presume on the grace of God, but rather to pray urgently for it! The Lord’s Glory, the Gospel, and His promises are at stake! “*Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.*”⁶⁹ ♦

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⁶⁴ Galatians 1:8-9

⁶⁵ Philippians 1:27.

⁶⁶ I John 5:19

⁶⁷ II Thessalonians.2: 5-12.

⁶⁸ Hebrews 10:30, 31

⁶⁹ Hebrews 12:28, 29