

The “*Son of Perdition*”

“And then the man of rebellion will come—the son of hell. He will defy every god there is. He will go in and sit as God in the temple [place] of God, claiming that he himself is God” [11 Thess. 2:3-4, The Catholic Living Bible.]

ROMAN CATHOLICISM



**Who is this “son of hell” who claims to be
God and says he occupies God’s place?
What are his credentials?**

Let’s see if we can find him. Come inside.

Buff Scott, Jr.

The
“*Son of Perdition*”

ROMAN
CATHOLICISM

BUFF SCOTT, JR.

[Reformer - Columnist - Defector]

*A Defector of “Churchianity” Affirms that Jesus Christ is not the
Author of Catholicism and her Offspring, Protestantism*



*“We [Catholic Popes] hold upon this earth the place of God
Almighty” (Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, June 20, 1894).*

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FOREWORD

by Brooks Wilson

I first became acquainted with Buff Scott, Jr. several years ago when a friend introduced me to his *Reformation Rumbblings* column. At the time, I was yet in the process of freeing myself from the tentacles of partisan religion. Naturally, Buff's writings helped me greatly along the way to freedom in Christ Jesus. Later, I visited Buff at his home in Arizona and we became fast friends. We also discovered we shared similar childhoods, plus a similar religious heritage.

I have used Buff's articles and books with great success to help many people along their path to freedom in Messiah Jesus. Buff's ability to expose the fallacies of traditional religion and sectarianism offers rare insight into what is going on in the religious world. While reformers typically seek to reform one isolated segment of the religious Establishment, Buff retains a macro view of the need for reformation.

Change is not something most of us find comfortable. Buff's writings set off a firestorm within his readers, as did the efforts of countless reformers before him. While some refuse reformation, others find life exhilarating again after starting their own personal path of reform. Buff reminds us that a full commitment to our Lord Jesus is not without cost. But God's blessings are upon those who love Him with all of their heart, mind, and spirit.

Buff's love for souls and the Truth of God may be the hallmark of his life. However, I have found Buff a faithful friend with rare talent in the art of storytelling, an easy laugh and the rare ability to enjoy the simple things of life. There is nothing he appreciates more than the company of his wife Rosita, rousing conversation with friends, and a pot of pinto beans with cornbread. May his tribe increase!

Author/Reformer - Ohio (USA)

BUFF'S NEW BOOK

by Nash Balinton

Buff Scott, Jr. has once again composed an excellent treatise that bears the fruits of our Heavenly Father's true order through His Son Jesus Christ. He did not frame it through the organized church, but by his adeptness to think independently and freely of all partisan religions.

Over the past several years, Buff has increased the knowledge and awareness of many readers regarding the corruptions and fallacies bred by the Vatican and her clerics. It is God's eternal purpose that Christ Jesus be head over all things that pertain to the family of believers, not some elite hierarchal icon located in Rome or elsewhere (Eph. 1:22-23).

However, that family of believers has been abused and deformed by the traditional church institution, namely Roman Catholicism. Because of the "Holy See's" human traditions and doctrines, the original order has been abandoned and corruption and pagan practices have replaced it.

I grew up in the San Francisco Bay area. In my early encounters at Sunday morning Mass and camp outings, I personally witnessed what I am affirming.

Praise the Lord, however, for He redirected my path when I was attending the Boise State University in Boise, Idaho on a football scholarship. I had always been searching for that "true freedom" of serving the Lord in a real relationship. My background consisted of many religions, and all were akin to serving a "religion" vs. serving Jesus.

I'm looking forward to the impact Buff's new "labor of love" and efforts at reform will have upon divided Christendom.

Veteran Law Enforcement Officer, CA (USA)

A Freethinker's Testament

I was 26 years of age when I landed my first church job as pulpit minister, teacher, and pastor. My career in the bowels of “Churchianity” continued for a few decades—sometimes part-time, sometimes full-time. That was a giant step for a hillbilly who was born and brought up in the *Appalachian Mountains* of Eastern Kentucky, one mile from where the *Hatfield-McCoy Feud* began. Mom was a Hatfield before she married Dad.

There were eight of us children, all red-headed, and poverty was rampant. My friends chuckle when I tell them Mom and Dad were so poor they couldn't afford to have me, so one of my neighbors had me! Violence in those mountains was common, and when I was only four years old, I watched a man shoot another man down, 20 feet in front of me. The impact of the bullet made him sick instantaneously and he fell to his knees and threw up. I screamed and ran into the house. As the bullet missed his heart, but barely, and lodged in his rib cage, he survived. But he never again “violated” the shooter's wife.

Such was life in the *Appalachian Mountains*. Dad did some heavy drinking and bootlegging when I was a kid, but surrendered his unprincipled lifestyle and embraced Messiah Jesus when I was about 11 years old. He threw his cigarettes and bottle of moonshine whiskey in the same creek he was immersed (“baptized”), and never touched them again.

A good education was scarce. I missed out on a lot of *formal* education but made up for it later and became a writer and columnist.

In 1976, after diligently evaluating and researching institutional religion, I concluded that “Churchianity” was not the solution to

Brief Testament

sin or to the world's problems. I laid the blame for our gloomy and schismatic and partisan predicament at the feet of Roman Catholicism, for I am convinced she is the mother of all past and modern-day sects and cults—as I hope to establish.

In this endeavor, I expect to authenticate my premise by calling upon biblical and external witnesses who will identify the renegade (apostate) church and her offspring, the various Protestant sects.

Let it be known at the outset that I hold no animosity in my heart toward those sincere Catholics who are caught up in the web of Roman Catholicism. Our next-door neighbors, on both sides of us, are Roman Catholics, and we are the best of friends.

I detest Protestantism alongside Roman Catholicism. I will not discriminate by opposing one sectarian *ism* while promoting a different sectarian *ism*. I oppose and abhor the Protestant and Roman Catholic *systems*, their divisive and greedy schemes, and their theological leaders and popes, for they have subjugated millions of innocent people who are free from pretense.

Consequently, I accuse contemporary “Pharaohs”—clerics and popes—of making “brick-makers” of their bondservants while they “crack the whip.” Power, control, and money are the driving forces behind the institutional church. And Roman Catholicism is the leading culprit, as I will try to substantiate.

I have learned that fitting and well-defined communication, written or spoken, is unrivaled in reaching the hearts and minds of potential readers or listeners. This will be my aim in this effort. I will work to honor this commitment without going overboard with an overload of unnecessary chatter and “eloquent” rhetoric. *Enjoy!*

Chapter 1

THE BOWELS OF CATHOLICISM

Is the Roman Catholic Church of heaven or of earth? Is she Authentic or counterfeit? Is she apostolic or apostate? Is she a “Holy See” or an “Unholy See”? Is her pope a Vicar of Christ or a fraudulent proxy?

While the apostle Paul was at Miletus, he sent for the shepherds of the congregation at Ephesus. He warned them that “fierce wolves” under the guise of a counterfeit spiritual agenda would “*come in among you, not sparing the flock. And from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away disciples after them*” (Acts 20:17-30).

Paul does not describe these “fierce wolves” or fallacious teachers in detail, or chronicle their religious persuasion. Sometime after his departure from this earth, they arose and spoke perverted things. The whole renegade system was in the making.

This synchronizes with Paul’s admonitions—and predictions—to the Christian community at Thessalonica (2 Thess. 2). He told them that the day of the Lord—His second coming—“*will not come, unless the rebellion [apostasy or apostate system] comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed [made known], the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple [place] of God, proclaiming himself to be God.*”

The “restraining” influence at the time was the Roman Empire, which prevented this apostate system from reaching full-bloom. “*He who now restrains it will do so until he [Roman Empire] is out the way.*” Paul noted that this system’s arrival will be lawless,

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and will be “by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”

“Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things?” Paul asked. The apostate or renegade structure was beginning to develop *within* the community of the redeemed, even as Paul penned his warning and disclosed the symptoms.

The Catholic Living Bible, The Way, calls him “the son of hell” and accuses him of “claiming that he himself is God” (2 Thess. 2). This is the same “man” (system) the apostle Paul told evangelist Timothy about and added that his “teachings are of demons.” In plain words, the system (man) behind all of this was—and is—“from hell,” as the Catholic Bible describes it.

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times [grace era] some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons...who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth” (1 Timothy 4:1-5).

Again, *The Catholic Living Bible, The Way*, says it even better by calling these fiendish apostates “teachers with devil-inspired ideas...who will tell lies with straight faces and do it so often that their consciences won’t even bother them. They will say it is wrong to be married and wrong to eat meat.”

“THE SON OF HELL”—HIS ID

History does not report an apostate system *within* the Christian movement prior to A.D. 200. There were *local* pockets of apostasy,

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but no *general* apostasy until 2-3 hundred years later. It was at that time that Roman Catholicism began to blossom. These passages do not refer to Nero and the Judiazers, as some claim, because this apostate system was to develop from *within* the redeemed community—commonly called “church.” And we’re not concerned about apostasies within Judaism. We’re talking about a “falling away” *within* the community of believers, which Paul predicted would happen (Acts 20:29-30). Note the marks of this apostate system, as recorded in the scriptures already alluded to, and then tell me *which* ecclesiastical institution carries these satanic labels.

- **He will exalt himself over God.**
- **He will set himself up in God’s temple or place.**
- **He will claim to be God.**
- **He will do counterfeit miracles and every sort of evil.**
- **He will prohibit marriage.**
- **He will say it is wrong to eat certain foods [on certain days].**
- **His teachings will be that of demons [satanic].**
- **He will continue his dirty work until the Lord comes again.**

I am not aware of any *predominant* apostate system in history that bears these symbols except the “Apostolic See.” It is best to remember there were no *general* apostasies from the Christian faith, and no *widespread* abandonment of heaven’s new arrangement, during the first century. Considering this fact, the counterfeit system Paul described—*Roman Catholicism*—still exists for Jesus has not returned and “overthrown it with the breath of his mouth and destroyed it by the splendor of his coming” (2 Thess. 2:8).

When the Roman Empire lost its grip upon the nations, Catholicism began to develop. Shortly afterwards, its leaders sat in

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“God’s temple [place], proclaiming [themselves] to be God” (v. 4). That is why this system’s popes expect to be called “Holy Father” or God himself, a divine title applicable to God only (John 17:11).

The apostle Paul’s prophecy did *not* refer to the Jewish people under the leadership of the wicked John Levi, as some seem to think. True, during the upheaval associated with the Jewish calamity (A. D. 67-70), many Jewish criminals, including the wicked John Levi, caused havoc among the Jewish nation, particularly at Jerusalem. Matters all over were in an uproar. God’s terrible judgment was about to be poured out upon His favorite (past) people. But to ascribe this, or any part of it, to the apostasy Paul foretold, would be missing Paul’s main thrusts. The “falling away” was to be *within* the Christian community. Paul told the Christian leaders at Ephesus:

“I know that after my departure, fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. And from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30).

Paul repeated this warning of an apostasy to Timothy and said this apostate system would adopt the “teachings of demons, forbid marriage, and require abstinence from [certain] foods” (1 Timothy 4:1-3). *This characterization, hardly without doubt, points to Rome and the “Holy See.”* This is the same apostasy Paul addressed in his letter to the Thessalonians. It is obvious that this demonic system of religion still exists and is thriving under the banner of “Roman Catholicism.”

Let it be understood at this junction that Paul did *not* address the *Roman-Jewish War* and Jerusalem’s destruction (A. D. 67-70) in

Thessalonians, but rather an apostasy that was in the making *at the time* he penned his words, which was *prior* to A. D. 67-70. And that apostasy did not *formally* develop or reach fruition until much later, as history corroborates.

POPES AS “GOD HIMSELF”

It is blasphemous for any human being to place himself on equality with God, as the “Holy See’s” Popes have done. To apply divine titles to mere men, such as “Holy Father” or “His Holiness,” is the height of apostasy. Even our Lord never once referred to Himself as “Holy Father,” and no one called Him “Holy Father.” Jesus used the term only once when He, in prayer, addressed God the Father as “Holy Father” (John 17:11). The title is not used elsewhere in scripture. History chronicles the fact that popes have considered themselves on the same level as God the Father.

- **“We [Catholic Popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty”** (Pope Leo XIII, *Encyclical Letter*, June 20, 1894).
- **“But the supreme teacher in the Church is the Roman Pontiff. Union of minds, therefore, requires together with a perfect accord in the one faith, complete submission and obedience of will to the Church and to the Roman Pontiff, as to God Himself”** (Pope Leo VIII, *Encyclical Letter*, “*On the Chief Duties of Christians as Citizens*,” 1890, & *Great Encyclical Letters*, 193).
- **“All names, which in the Scriptures are applied to Christ, by virtue of which it is established that He is over the church, all the same names are applied to the Pope”** (*On the Authority of the Councils*, Book 2, Chapter 17).

These bits of history from the archives of Catholicism are only a few of the many that could be cited. Each quotation is lifted from Catholic publications that have the *imprimatur* (Latin for “*let it be*

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printed”) of a Bishop, Archbishop, or Cardinal, which makes each excerpt authoritative. The average pew-sitting Catholic is unaware of the depth of this blasphemy.

“*There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*” (I Timothy 2:5).

As a “side order,” in the *Catholic National*, July, 1895, it is written, “*The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, he is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under the veil of flesh.*”

The apostle Paul, prophesying under the influence of the Holy Spirit, “hit the nail on the head” when he said this apostate system’s chieftain would “*take his seat in the temple [place] of God and proclaim himself to be God*” (2 Thess. 2:3-4).

Based on these segments of divine evidence, it would be ridiculous to deny that the “Holy See” is the heretical religious institution Paul alluded to.

ENDNOTE: It may be argued that the quotations from past and recent popes, which relates to their being God on earth, were not issued from “Peter’s Chair” and, therefore, are not infallible writ. If past and recent popes issued fallacious statements while sitting in “Peter’s Chair,” or while seated on a tree stump, we have no choice but to question their trustworthiness and credibility.

SOURCES: *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 15 Volumes, Special Edition, under the auspices of Knights of Columbus Catholic Truth Committee, *The Encyclopedia Press Inc.*, New York, 1913.

Catholic Dictionary, Addis & Arnold, *The Catholic Publication Society Co.*, N. Y., 1887.

Butler’s Lives of the Saints, Thom. Richardson & Son, London, for the *Catholic Book Society*, 1846, 12 Volumes. (These sources, plus *Glories of Mary*, will be found throughout much of this project.)

Chapter 2

“EVERY SORT OF EVIL”

“This man of sin will come as Satan’s tool, full of satanic power, and will trick everyone with strange demonstrations, and will do great miracles” (2 Thess. 2:9, The Catholic Living Bible).

“The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing” (New International Version).

The “Holy See” has a long-standing history of evils that ought to boggle the minds of her devotees. The apostle Paul prophesied in his second letter to the Thessalonians that the “son of hell” or “lawless one” would “do every sort of evil.” Consequently, it would not be off-center to label this system the “*Unholy See*” or “Satan’s Brainchild.”

If we were to search the archives of history, starting in about A. D. 200 (the earliest *formal* date of Roman Catholicism as an adolescent), for the most immoral and corrupted theological power, the “*Unholy See*” would be at the very top of the list. If I’m correct, and if history supports my postulation, it is preposterous to promote her as “the only Church founded by Jesus Christ and His Apostles.” Instead, she would be the “son of hell.”

Lest it be overlooked, immorality and corruption have also been part of the Protestant movement through the centuries. After all, she is one of the “*Unholy See’s*” offspring. And all of it has been repulsive and of Satan, but *nothing* in comparison to the level of wickedness and sexual depravities of the mother of all sects and cults, Roman Catholicism. The apostle Paul labeled her correctly

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when he said she would “do every sort of evil.” “*The coming of the lawless [evil] one is by the activity of Satan with all [evil] power and false signs and wonders*” (2 Thess. 2:9-10).

FAR-REACHING

As we travel this route, it is best to retain the thought that Roman Catholicism’s abominations and scandalous behavior, particularly among her popes and clerics, have been widespread, as opposed to their being regional or parochial or restricted to a fixed era.

It is not surprising that the early body of believers had their problems as well. They were confined to *local* congregations, however, not to the universal body.

As examples: Incest was one of the problems at Corinth. A man was living with his father’s wife (I Cor. 5:1-2). The same body of believers made a drunken feast of the Lord’s Supper (I Cor. 11:20-22). Some of the believers at Galatia relied on the old Law of Moses for justification and salvation. Other problems could be cited. These blemishes did not affect the body of believers *systemically*. But the “Unholy See’s” digressions and detestable evils through the centuries have been extensive and pervasive, affecting almost every sphere of her existence.

In my research, I have found the Vatican and her ecclesiastics vexed with all forms of spiritual and moral corruption. Even Satan must blush when he sees what goes on behind the secretive doors of the Papacy. But the Vatican’s colorful history will not be found in newspapers or spread across your TV screen. Even *Fox News*, as newsworthy as they are, will not air her abominable history, for their news organization appears to be set in the Roman Catholic mold—as are many other major avenues of public communication.

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As noted, all manner of corruption, bribery, depravity, and sexual perversions have permeated the “Unholy See” since her inception. Her evils have transpired over a period of centuries and cannot, as per history, be confined to specific generations or particular periods. Once this “man of hell” was born, “all hell broke loose!” And she was not *formally* organized until centuries *after* the Christian community was ushered in. Her genesis was much too late to be what Jesus and His apostles gave birth to. Yet she claims her roots can be traced back to the first century.

Of interest is that during the week of August 3, 2003, *The CBS Evening News* reported that a document from the archives of the “Holy See” had surfaced, formulated in 1962 by a high-ranking Catholic Cardinal, which directs all Bishops to conceal and keep secret all sex acts between Catholic clerics and the children they sexually abuse, plus sex acts between the clergy and brute animals.

LET THE CATHOLIC ARCHIVES SPEAK

The best route of authentication in this matter is to permit Catholicism to speak for herself. Her history is pregnant with data the average Catholic knows little or nothing about. What followers is only a *partial* list of her abominations and scandalous behavior.

- **Pope John XXIII was worldly-minded, crafty, unscrupulous, and immoral** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VIII, p. 434).
- **Pope Innocent VIII had seven or eight illegitimate sons by different women. He sold Catholic offices to the highest bidders** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VIII, pgs. 19-20).
- **Pope Alexander VI is called the worst pope. He had eight illegitimate children by different women. Four of his children were brought to Rome with him when he became Pope** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VI, p. 213).

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- **Pope Sergius was father of Pope John XI by MoroZIA, one of the worst women in history. He declared as valid the fourth marriage of Leo VI, Greek Emperor** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. XIII, p. 729).
- **Pope John X was made Archbishop when he was five years of age** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VIII, p. 425).
- **Pope John XI, son of Pope Sergius III, was made pope by his mother at twenty years of age** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VIII, p. 426 & *De Montor*, Vol. I, p. 247).
- **Pope John XVII had three sons** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VIII, p. 429).
- **Pope John XII is described as “a coarse, immoral man.” He was stricken with paralysis while committing adultery** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VIII, p. 426).
- **Pope Benedict IX was the nephew of two preceding popes and one succeeding one, and was made pope at 12 years of age. “He was a disgrace to the Chair of Peter”** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. IV, p. 17, and Vol. II, p. 429).
- **Pope Julius II was wicked and had three illegitimate daughters and bribed the Cardinals for the office** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VIII, p. 562).
- **Pope John XIII hanged his conspiring enemies** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VIII, p. 427).

Pope John Paul II, who died in 2005, seemed to have been one of the better popes, yet during his tenure he led a religious regiment that was—and *is*—fraught with maladjusted ecclesiastics in the likes of pedophiles and homosexuals. What was supposed to have been a “Holy See” under his leadership continued to be, *as before*, an army of sexual perverts and a haven of rest for sensual Catholic clerics.

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Although Pope John Paul II seemed to have been a moral leader, the Papacy’s history is riddled with corruption and immorality. Her depraved history, eccentric doctrines, and idolatrous, ghostly rituals began at an early age and continue to this day. I affirm she is far more pagan than Christian. Go to any Library, or connect to the Internet, and there you will find an abundance of references relative to the sinister deeds of the Vatican—the “Unholy See” of corruption. Her *entire* history, from her genesis till now, is polluted with all manner of wickedness.

This is not to say that *all* ecclesiastics within the “Unholy See” are or have been morally “impaired.” However, we are obliged to face reality and concede that overall the Papacy and her seed have a history of moral and doctrinal decadence.

- **Violence among “the faithful” has played a big role in Catholicism’s history. Pope John X was seized and thrown into prison, where he died** (Cath. Ency., Vol. VIII, p. 426).
- **“According to one authority, Pope Sergious III took pity on the two imprisoned pontiffs, and caused them to be put to death”** (Cath. Ency., Vol. IX, p. 159; Vol. III, p. 729).
- **Pope Leo V, who became Pope in 903 A. D., was forcibly dethroned and died in prison** (Cath. Ency., Vol. III, p. 729; Vol. IX, p. 159).
- **Pope Steven VI dug up the body of Pope Formosus, propped it up in a chair, conducted a “trial,” condemned him as a heretic, cut off his fingers, and threw his remains in the Tiber River** (Cath. Ency., Vol. XIV, p. 289).

Should I continue? Her history is fraught with kindred accounts. Every sort of evil, iniquity, depravity, and sexual perversions have saturated the Vatican’s portals since she proclaimed herself to be

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“the only church founded by Jesus Christ and His apostles.” Let it be said again that the evils profiled in this chapter transpired over a period of centuries and cannot, according to history, be confined to *specific* generations or *particular* periods.

News dispatches and investigations have confirmed that Catholicism is a haven for homosexuals and pedophiles. A large number of her clerical leaders are sexual deviants. These are facts, not rumors. The investigations and revelations are reality, not hearsay. I’ll give you two contemporary paragons among many others that could be cited.

Santa Fe, New Mexico is a relatively small town of 68,000 residents. In the 1990s, a respected Catholic Bishop was sent there to “clean up the church.” This is the same Bishop who was transferred to Phoenix to clean up the sexual clutter Bishop Thomas O’Brien left behind. In the process of his cleaning up the sexual mess at Santa Fe, he dismissed 20 homosexual and pedophile priests.

Yes, you’re reading me correctly. Twenty priests in a town of only 68,000 were guilty of homosexuality and child abuse. The Catholic hierarchy had to pay out millions of dollars in lawsuits. For those of you who feel I have exaggerated my “press releases,” this is only scratching the surface of the problem within the mis-named “Holy See.”

You’ve probably heard the story of the Los Angeles mess. As of July 16, 2007, the Catholic Archdiocese in Los Angeles has agreed to pay 660 million dollars to 508 sexually-abused victims of the Catholic clergy. This again confirms what I have been saying for decades: *The Roman Catholic Church is a haven for sexual*

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misfits. Cardinal Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles is currently under investigation for covering up sexual scandals under his watch.

Satan is having a hey-day within this apostate church. If our Lord is the author of this demonic system of religion, I will opt for atheism. For when this church’s “faithful” clerics can preside over the “Eucharist,” or “christen” a small child, and then exit the “Sanctuary” to sodomize a male youngster, it is time to outlaw the system that breeds such hellish trash. Outlaw it. Condemn it. Abolish it from the face of the earth. For if world governments do not do it, God will. *“The Lord Jesus will overthrow it with the breath of His mouth and destroy it by the splendor of His coming”* (2 Thess. 2:8).

CLARIFYING

Lest you think I’m coming down too hard on Catholicism, rest assured that Protestantism has its share of vile clerics in the likes of Jim Bakers, Jimmy Swaggarts, Ted Haggards, the homosexual Bishops of the Episcopal Church, and many more. *But nothing compared to the unholy chambers of Roman Catholicism.*

Let me be bold: *A large division of the “Unholy See” is a “spiritual whorehouse.”* Now you know one of the many reasons I refuse to be labeled Protestant or Catholic. My future as a “believer at large” will continue unabated—not a believer *plus* a Protestant, and not a believer *plus* a Catholic.

And I don’t need to spell out my reasons for believing that the modern-day religious Establishment has drifted beyond return and is damaged beyond repair. You may rest your oars that heaven is not the author of these bizarre behaviors within the organized church. Satan is in control. He has infiltrated the Christian commu-

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nity with all manner of wickedness and corruption.

I do not wish to imply that all of the Vatican’s disciples are wallowing in the same evil mire as their leaders. The vast majority of them seem to be honest and sincere in their religious persuasion. They have been caught up in the web of spiritual slavery and know nothing except what their overlords have brainwashed them to believe—just as hundreds of thousands of Protestants have been caught up in a similar web of slavery. It is the Roman Catholic *system* and her Popes and ecclesiastical leaders I contend against, for they are the harbingers and promoters of her eerie doctrinal agenda, ghostly and pagan rituals, and mystic observances.

Unless the religious Establishment or institutional church undergoes complete reform, she is on her way out. Unless she’s redeemed, some future historian will write a history on *“The Rise and Fall of Western Christianity.”* Without regeneration, the organized church will self-abort.

Let’s get it straight. *Religion is big business.* Just ask Protestants Hal Lindsey and Grant Jeffrey, two self-appointed “prophets” among us who prophesied a catastrophe on Y2K. They hauled in hundreds of thousands of dollars from weak believers who shelled out greenbacks to buy their tapes and books and to hear their lectures. They’re now living a luxurious lifestyle, thanks to those gullible believers who fell for their sensational rhetoric.

Modern-day religion is for the birds. I will never again “come down” with “mad church disease.” I was healed of “churchitis” and its symptoms decades ago in favor of freedom in Jesus Christ. I have never looked back. I have never regretted my decision. And I will never turn back. I can identify with those who are still held

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captive by the “powers that be” of the religious Establishment. Like them, I too believed Jesus authored a religious party (sect) in the likes of a “church.” I preached my brand of church on the sidewalks and from many pulpits. I pressed her upon others. I strove to win converts to her ranks. I was totally sold on the concept that Jesus redeemed “my church” with His sacrifice. I equated “church” with God’s new reign and defied any man to show otherwise. Like all other church addicts, I used the same arguments, affirmed the same theology, advocated the same principles, and quoted the same scriptures.

But I defected all of this sectarian ideology when I discovered reality in Messiah Jesus. I am no longer in partisan chains, and I never shall be again—so help me God.

POSTSCRIPT: In regards to the data from *Catholic Encyclopedias* and *Catholic Dictionaries*, which I have used and will be using extensively in this book, it should be clearly stated that no authorized Catholic literature can be printed by Catholic printers, or read by Catholic members, without the *imprimatur* (Latin for “let it be printed”) of a high ranking Catholic official.

INFO-NOTE: According to official Catholic sources, it was not until after the fifth century the Roman Catholic Church was completely organized. She did not have an Archbishop until the end of the fourth century, and it was much later before she had Cardinals and Popes (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. IX, p. 61; *Cath. Ency.*, Vol. IV, p. 44).

EXTRA: Let it be said that just because a “man of the cloth” wears his shirt backwards, dresses like mother and wants to be called father, whether Catholic or Protestant, does not make him a holy fellow. Underneath those “holy robes” could be—and often is—the unholy man alive. History has confirmed this repeatedly.

Chapter 3

PETER *APOSTLE OR POPE?*

The apostle Peter, who is falsely alleged to be the first Pope or “Bishop of Rome,” never once placed himself on a par with God—as Rome’s popes do. Instead, he described himself as a mere man. When Cornelius, a Gentile, “fell down at his [Peter’s] feet and worshipped him,” Peter lifted him up and rebuked him. “*Stand up! I, too, am a man,*” he told Cornelius (Acts 10:25-26). *The Catholic Living Bible* says, “*Stand up! I’m not a god!*”

But one of the most crushing blows against Catholicism’s claim that Peter was the first pope or “Bishop of Rome” is that Peter never once made such a claim. He wrote two of the Bible’s letters, I Peter and II Peter, but in neither does he identify himself as Pope, Pontiff, “Holy Father,” “Bishop of Rome,” or “Lord God.” Instead, he introduces himself as an “apostle and servant”—*the same appellations and level of function as the other apostles.*

We are compelled to ask: *Why?* Why did Peter pass up such a grand opportunity to inform his readers of his “authoritative” position as “Pontiff” and “Head of the Church”? Why did he fail to interject himself as “Pope” or “Bishop of Rome”? The answer is obvious: *He was neither Pope nor “Head of the Church.”*

On the birthday of the Christian community (Acts 2), where Peter is recorded to have spoken extensively about the risen Lord, not once does he refer to himself as Pope or “Head of the Church.” I find this rather baffling, for most popes, since the office was formed, have identified themselves as Pope or Pontiff or “Head of the Church” in their *official* speeches and documents. The lack of biblical documentation is conspicuous because of its absence!

Peter: Apostle or Pope?

According to history, between 327-650 A. D., Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria had Bishops who were major figures, but no Pope yet, although the Bishop of Rome claimed preeminence as the direct successor of Peter.

As noted earlier, reliable sources inform us that it was not until after the fifth century the Roman Catholic Church was *formally* organized. She did not have an Archbishop until the end of the fourth century, and it was much later before she had Cardinals and Popes (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. IX, p. 61; *Cath. Ency.*, Vol. IV, p. 44).

So regardless of how we slice the cake, we come up with *zero* popes during the formative years of the redeemed community.

BOWING DOWN TO POPES

It is claimed by the Roman Catholic clergy and their followers that they do not bow down to popes for the purpose of worshipping them. They describe their ritual as an “act of reverence.” A religious “act of reverence,” however, is the same as an act of worship. Yet Peter, who is alleged by Catholics to have been the first pope, refused to allow Cornelius to bow down to and worship him.

Every pope in history has expected others to bow down to them, including Pope John Paul II—the *exact* opposite of what the apostle Peter told Cornelius. I conclude, therefore, that the “Unholy See” and her clerics dishonor the very Bible they claim to have written by rebelling against its teachings.

“*Stand up! I’m not a god!*”—Peter to Cornelius, when he “bowed down and worshipped” Peter (Acts 10:26, *The Catholic Living Bible*).

Chapter 4

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION OR Apostate Succession?

“You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my [ekklesia] congregation...I will give you the keys of heaven’s reign, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:18).

I would interject at the outset that if the doctrine of “Apostolic Succession” is proven to be unsound, it follows that the doctrine of “Papal Infallibility” would also be foreign to the divine will. For, in truth, they stand or fall together. Another fact is that if the doctrine of “Apostolic Succession” cannot be authenticated by heaven’s deposition, the scriptures (Matthew through Revelation), it would then be equally foreign to the central thrusts of heaven.

Let it be understood at this junction—*and this is important*—that both Protestant and Catholic machines base their *central* doctrines on, and derive their *basic* source of doctrinal authority from, what is commonly known as the “Holy Scriptures”—regardless of Version. Consequently, for either partisan system to wander outside of these perimeters to prove a proposition relating to those perimeters is to invent and design an alien strategy.

I am not saying there is no truth outside of the New Covenant scriptures, which were written by early believers of the Christian faith. Truth is truth, wherever it is discovered, whether in the writings of Socrates or Shakespeare—or Satan. For even Satan spoke the truth on at least one occasion (Matt. 4:5-6 & Luke 4:9-11). What I am saying is that if we are striving to establish what we

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believe is a biblical rule or truth, that rule or truth must be tried before the biblical courts. This, at least to me, is common logic.

If I were debating something Shakespeare allegedly taught, I would, logically, be expected to base my major premise on Shakespeare's writings, not on some external source. I might refer to an external source, such as a post-writer's explanations of Shakespeare's literature, which would be acceptable reading material, but those writings would be explanations or conceptions only as opposed to what Shakespeare *actually* conveyed.

My point here is to introduce the principle that quoting from "church fathers" is acceptable, as our Catholic friends find pleasure in doing to bolster their doctrinal tenets, but the writings of those "Church Fathers" would not equal the trustworthy writings of the biblical authors.

To put it another way, the writings of the "Church Fathers," whether Catholic or Protestant, are not *equally* credible when placed alongside the biblical writings. If we consider the New Covenant scriptures as having been received through God's providence, or "breathed out of God" (2 Tim. 3:16-17), as are the Old Covenant scriptures, which Paul referred to when he wrote these words to evangelist Timothy, we are duty-bound to view them as our *basic* model in matters pertaining to Christian doctrine.

Having made these points in advance, or laid the groundwork for what follows, we will now proceed to the scriptures, which Catholic ecclesiastics and their devotees rely upon to confirm their traditional teachings relating to *Apostolic Succession*. Keep abreast that if their doctrinal agenda on this matter does not agree with the biblical testimony, it and their "Papal Infallibility" creed are inef-

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fectual. And if my exegesis of these matters fails to synchronize with the biblical documents, my efforts will be just as ineffectual.

SCRIPTURES USED AS “EVIDENCE”

Matthew 16:18-19 do not reference “Bishop,” *pappas* or “Pope,” or any other clerical figure. There is nothing in the Greek that remotely connects Jesus’ remarks to today’s Catholic Bishops, Archbishops, Cardinals, and Popes. The oldest Greek manuscripts justify the following paraphrase:

“And I tell you, you [Peter] are a stone, and upon your confession that I am the Messiah, I will found my community, and the evil powers of the invisible world will never destroy it.”

I have before me a literal translation from the Greek into English of Jesus’ proclamation. It reads:

“Now I also say to you, that you are Peter [a piece of rock], and upon this bedrock [confession that I am the Messiah, Buff], I will build my group of Called ones, and the gates of the grave will not overpower it” (*The Christian Bible*, CHRISTIAN BIBLE SOCIETY, Post Office Box 530, Mammoth Spring, AR 72554).

It is obvious that Peter is not referenced in Jesus’ words, “upon this rock,” because Peter was only one of the “builders” in this sacred community. Paul says the household of God, or redeemed community, was “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone” (Eph. 2:19-20).

Note, please, “apostle” is in the plural. It is safe to conclude, then, that the Vatican’s version of Matthew 16:17-19 is a distorted

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version, and that the community Jesus founded was not founded on Peter *alone*, but on the foundation of all *twelve* apostles.

It is true, however, that Peter was first chosen to use those “keys” to open up or usher in the new kingdom (reign) of heaven, as recorded in Acts 2. It is also true that every time the apostles, whether Peter or the others, preached the Good News and receptive hearts received it, they used those “keys.” The Good News, which always opens up receptive hearts, is the “keys” Jesus alluded to. The term “keys” is used symbolically, and it does not carry the idea of authority or supremacy. Instead, it refers to the message of salvation and its ability to bring receptive hearts into the new reign (kingdom). That basic message is: *Jesus is the Messiah*.

As to binding and loosening, all of the apostles were conferred this gift, not just Peter (Matt. 18:18 & John 20:23). We must not read too much into this part of the context. The apostles were divinely guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5 & Acts 2). The Holy Spirit had already revealed to them what was bound in heaven and what was loosed in heaven. Consequently, their “binding” and “loosing” could not *exceed* the perimeters God had already established.

This means that Peter and the other Eleven were not authorized to create their own laws and precepts and bind them upon others, as the Vatican has done through the centuries.

The bottom line in all of this is that Matthew 16:17-19 bears no resemblance to the Papacy’s dogma of “Apostolic Succession.” Since the founding of Roman Catholicism in the second and third centuries A. D., there has been a *succession of apostates*, but not an apostolic succession. To “establish” apostolic succession, one must go *outside* of the New Covenant letters, because the “evi-

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dence” is not found *inside* of those scriptures. All ambiguous religious philosophies parroted by sects, cults, and religious parties stem from *external* or *self-made* sources. And the “Unholy See” seems to be the chief “felon.”

Another scripture employed by Rome is found in the *Gospel of John*. The apostle reports Jesus as saying to Peter, “Feed my lambs” [young ones], “Tend my sheep” [oversee and protect them], and “Feed my sheep” [instruct and train them] (John 21:15-17). Patriarchs of the Catholic faith explain these words to mean that Peter was to be the *foremost* leader in the Christian movement and was chosen to reign as “Supreme Shepherd,” Pope, chief teacher of all Christians, and the principal role model in morals and doctrine. It has been said that what proves too much proves nothing. Such is the case here, for a number of reasons.

1) Through weakness of the spirit, Peter had denied his Lord three times. And now it seems the Messiah is giving him the opportunity, at least in some measure, to reconcile his weakness by a triple confession—“*Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.*” To claim that what Jesus said to Peter implies superiority is a twisting of the core implication.

2) If, as per John 21 and Matthew 16, the Papacy is correct in claiming that Peter was chosen to be the Chief Teacher, Supreme Shepherd, Bishop of Rome, Roman Pontiff, Pope, and the foremost role model in morals and doctrine, we may assume he was under a *moral obligation* to avoid discriminating against other races, particularly those of a different ethnic background who had converted to the Son of God. I believe this is a fair assumption.

3) If Peter violated his role model status by taking the lead in a

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racial bias incident, which falls under the heading of morals, it would strongly imply that he was not pope and Supreme Shepherd after all. And if another apostle opposed him to his face because he discriminated against a different race, we have a subordinate defying his superior. Listen to the apostle Paul:

“But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles, but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party [Jews]. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him [Peter], so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy” (Gal. 2:11-14).

Wow! Here we have “Pope Peter I,” “His Holiness,” the “Holy Father,” and “Roman Pontiff” being opposed, condemned, and accused of hypocrisy by a subordinate. I’m just wondering if Peter might have been sitting in the wrong “Chair”—his place of infallibility, *Ex Cathedra*—when he messed up on a moral issue and when his subordinate, Paul, “called him on the carpet.” It’s at least something to reflect upon, isn’t it?

4) The Catholic clergy claim that Peter was the shepherd who was chosen to feed and care for and oversee God’s *universal* flock. The claim is bogus, of course. When the apostle Paul was at Miletus, “he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders [shepherds/overseers] of the congregation to come to him” (Acts 20:17-31). When they arrived, Paul said to them, “*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the congregation of God.*”

If this is inconclusive, listen to the apostle Peter himself. In

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writing to exiled believers, he addressed the elders (shepherds) among them by saying, “As a fellow elder [shepherd] and a witness of the sufferings of Christ...shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight...and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Peter 5). I call your attention to a few obvious facts:

- **Peter was a shepherd *among* shepherds, not the Chief Shepherd.**
- **He referred to Messiah Jesus as the Chief Shepherd, not himself.**
- **He begins his letter by referring to himself as an apostle, not pope, Bishop of Rome, or Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 1:1). He begins his second letter by referring to himself as a servant and apostle, the *exact* level of function as the other apostles—not superior to the Twelve (Paul included), but on the same level.**
- **In other scriptures, such as Timothy and Titus, we find elders (shepherds) being chosen by the sheep and appointed by either an evangelist or by an apostle, not by a pope or by the “Bishop of Rome.” (In regards to *who* chooses men to lead, see Acts 6:3.)**
- **Jesus is the only *Chief Shepherd* of God’s flock. In Hebrews 13:20, He is called the “Great Shepherd of the sheep.”**

There is zero room for a second *chief* shepherd, whether Peter, Paul, or any of the other apostles—or by any man-made “Holy Father.”

In the early years of the movement, each local congregation of believers chose their own leaders and special servants (deacons), as scripture confirms (Acts 6:1-5). This is an excellent model for congregations today. Consequently, we do not need apostles today, for they have already laid the foundation and introduced the models—prototypes—for all ages. In one true sense, however, we

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do have apostles today—*not in the flesh*, but in the anatomy of their writings. The bottom line is that the early shepherds of God’s sheep were not selected and appointed by some high-ranking prelate, “divine right” officiator in Rome. His office was non-existent until centuries later.

The Papacy relies heavily upon still another scripture to bolster her claim that Peter was and is the Lord’s “Chieftain” on earth (Luke 22:32). In this passage, Jesus does not wish that Peter be sifted like wheat by Satan. But he was nonetheless, when he denied his Lord three times. Our Lord told him, “*And when you have turned again [repented], strengthen your brothers.*”

There is absolutely nothing in these instructions to Peter that relates to superiority or head of anything. Peter was told to do what *all* believers are admonished to do, particularly shepherds—*strengthen and encourage one another*. There are numerous passages of scripture that teach *mutual* participation and uplifting. The gift was not left to any one person. It is universal.

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION A FARCE

Once there were twelve envoys. One dropped out, literally, by hanging himself, and his vacancy, according to prophecy, needed to be filled to complete the “Twelve-Pack” again—in a manner of speaking. “*May another take his charge*” or place (Psalm 109:8).

Just prior to the great Pentecost, a Jewish festival, and the birthday of God’s new *ekklesia*, the Christian community, the Eleven gathered in an upper room and were devoting themselves to prayer (Acts 1:12-14). There were about 120, including the mother of Jesus and other women. Peter stood up among them and said that the scripture relating to Judas’ demise had to be fulfilled by

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choosing someone to take his place.

“And they [the Eleven] put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who is also called Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, ‘You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his place.’ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

At this junction, I think it appropriate that we examine the requirements or prerequisites Peter introduced to become an apostle like the Eleven. It is vital that we understand that *Peter himself* set forth the requirements (Acts 1:21-22).

- **He must be someone who has been in our presence during Jesus’ ministry, beginning with His immersion by John until the day He ascended back to heaven.**
- **He must be a witness to His resurrection.**

It is not necessary that we belabor the truth that no one, since the departure of the last apostle, has been able to satisfy the prerequisites initiated by Peter, whether he/they be called the “Bishop of Rome” or the “Twelve Apostles” of the Mormon cult.

“Oh,” but you say, “what about the apostle Paul? He wasn’t numbered with the Twelve, so how did he become an apostle? Neither did he witness Jesus’ resurrection.”

Paul speaks of this himself in his first letter to the Corinthians, and says he was as an apostle “untimely born” (1 Cor. 15:7-9). Or, as some translations render the verse, “*One born out of due time.*”

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What does this mean? There are a number of different readings, but the fact that Paul is speaking of the *way* he was chosen to be an apostle, like the Twelve, cannot be denied. I think Paul might be saying, at least in essence, that he was not “born” to be an apostle in the *same manner* as the others, but that the Lord made an exception in his case—“*untimely born.*”

As you recall, Paul was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians when the Lord *personally* appeared to him to make him a “chosen instrument,” an apostle (Acts 9). To the Corinthians, he wrote, “*Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen the Lord?*” (1 Cor. 9:1). Here Paul echoes the primary qualification to become an apostle, “*Have I not seen the Lord?*” This is the same requirement Peter issued. Let me underscore:

- **The Lord personally chose Paul to be an apostle a few years after the complete number of Twelve had been confirmed, thus making Thirteen apostles.**
- **He saw the Lord on the road to Damascus, which made him a witness, a principal requirement.**
- **He was “untimely born” an apostle.**
- **That the Lord made an exception in his case cannot be denied.**

Here is what we do *not* find in the scriptures, our *basic* written guide in our walk with the Lord:

- *We do not find one word from the Lord, or from Peter, or from Paul, or from any of the other biblical writers that the function of apostleship was to continue down through the ages in the form of ecclesiastical “Bishops” (a poorly translated term), Popes, Roman Pontiffs, or “Holy Fathers.”*

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- *If the Lord intended that the apostleship continue down through the centuries, surely He would have left some form of message to that effect. It is not there.*

The doctrine and application of “Apostolic Succession” by the “Apostolic See” does not have its roots in the scriptures this heretical sect falsely claims to have written, or in the archives of the “early church.” Instead, its roots are solely based on the traditions and customs of fallible men.

Traditional teachings and practices are admissible when they concur with heaven’s will (2 Thess. 2:15). But the traditional teachings of man, when elevated to heaven’s curriculum, are inadmissible. Jesus placed this issue in its proper setting:

“You leave the commandments of God and hold to the traditions of men”...Thus you [Pharisees] “make void the word of God by your traditions that you have handed down” (Mark 7:8 & 13).

Compare Jesus’ words with what Roman Catholicism has done for centuries. She has made void the word of God by “holding on to the traditions of men.” This reality should spur the “Unholy See” to initiate reform. But don’t hold your breath. She has had centuries to rectify her deficiencies, yet she continues to wallow in the same old sinister mire.

SIDE-NOTE: *No Catholic Pope in history has carried the credentials to be an apostle, for none has personally “seen the Lord.” —Peter, Acts 1.*

INFO-NOTE: *“No institution on earth has as much to fear from a general knowledge of the Bible as Catholicism” (Catholicism Against Itself, O. C. Lambert, 1956, p. 20).*

Chapter 5

ROMAN CATHOLICISM'S “*Blessed Virgin Mary*”

“*And behold, the star they had seen when it rose went before them...After going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him*” (Matt. 2:10-11).

Of interest is that the wise men who were led by God’s star to see the child Jesus “bowed down and worshipped *Him*.” If God intended that Mary be venerated, why didn’t the wise men bow down and worship *them* instead of *Him*? Why was Mary not bowed down to? Either the biblical testimony is wrong and the Catholic Hierarchy right, or the Catholic Hierarchy is wrong and the biblical evidence right. It cannot be both ways.

Luke chronicles the story of Joseph and Mary taking Jesus to the Jewish Temple “to present Him to the Lord,” according to the Law of Moses. While there, an elderly gent by the name of Simeon, led by the Spirit, took Jesus up in his arms and praised God for allowing him to see the Lord’s salvation (Luke 2:22-32).

Noteworthy is that Simeon did not idolize the child’s mother, as popes and their followers do. He blessed—paid deference to—*both* parents, not *just* Mary, and there is no hint he bowed down before Mary or revered her in any special way, as Catholics do. It is interesting, too, that Joseph received the *same* blessing as Mary, but Catholics do not esteem him in some idolatrous way.

On the same occasion, a prophetess by the name of Anna, well advanced in years, praised God and spoke of Jesus as being the “redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:36-38). Why did Anna fail to

“The Blessed Virgin Mary”

speak of the child’s mother on the same level of reverence as Catholics speak of her today? This question deserves an answer.

To honor Mary as a privileged and holy woman is one thing, but to bow down to her or to an *image* of her, or idolize her, is an entirely different matter. During the early years of the Christian community, no apostle or any other believer is ever spoken of as bowing down to her or placing her on the same level of reverence as the Vatican and her enthusiasts do. This cultic practice was invented centuries later by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, not by God. It is of the earth, not of heaven.

It seems strangely inconsistent that the apostle Peter, who is alleged to be the first pope, does not mention Mary in any of his biblical letters. Nor is there any record in any of the other letters, such as *Acts of the Apostles*, that Peter ever referred to Mary. Not only did he not mention her, straightforwardly or otherwise, but zero nothing is said by *any* apostle about the need to venerate or worship her. This fact speaks volumes against the Catholic’s view of Mary.

Why? Why did Peter fail to mention “The Blessed Virgin Mary”? Surely if all popes worshipped Mary and leaned on her for salvation, and they have, says history, and if Peter was the first pope, why does he not praise and adore Mary in the same vein as other popes? The question begs to be resolved.

POPES AND MARY

If popes are role models and instructors and guides for Catholics, and they are, and if Catholics are striving to follow their popes, and they are, they give the same level of reverence to Mary as their “Supreme Pontiffs.” It is a documented fact that the late Pope John

“The Blessed Virgin Mary”

Paul II seemed to have relied more on Mary for salvation than on Jesus.

Pope John Paul II made more than 40 pilgrimages to her shrines at Lourdes and Fatima. He even entrusted his *Apostolic Letters* to the hands of Mary. He prostrated himself in spirit before her image in the Shrine built for her by Bartolo Longo, “Apostle of the Rosary” (*Apostolic Letter, Oct. 16, 2002*).

Pope John Paul II spoke of the Rosary of Mary as a “sweet chain which unites us [Catholics] to God” (*Ibid.*). He was so hung up on Mary and the Rosary that he envisioned them as a “tower of salvation against the assaults of hell” (*Ibid.*). Instead of soliciting comfort from the Son of God, he appealed to Mary and wanted his final kiss to be from her during his final hour of life (*Ibid.*).

Years before he died he said the last word on his lips would be the name of Mary (*Ibid.*). At this point, I must inquire: *In the Pope’s mind, where was Jesus in all of this?* The scriptures he claimed to honor place Jesus as the Author of our salvation—*no one else*. Yet he relied on Mary for comfort in the hour of death and spoke of her as the “tower of salvation.” As we can see, the Pope’s sentiments collided with the words of Jesus: “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6).

“*Except through me*”? That *excludes* Mary. Yet Pope John Paul II, as well as previous popes, asked Mary to sustain them and obtain for them the grace of eternal salvation.

My thrust in all of this is to show how ridiculous it is when the Vatican and her disciples refuse to acknowledge that they worship Mary and depend on her in their time of need, instead of leaning

“The Blessed Virgin Mary”

on the Son of God, the *only* Hope of Salvation.

When we ponder Roman Catholicism’s popular “*15 Promises of Mary*,” we have yet another profound irony. Among those “Promises” we find that allegiance to Mary and the Rosary will save one from perishing and deliver him/her from purgatory. Those who recite the Rosary shall, at the moment of death, receive the same merits as the saints in paradise.

The Glories of Mary, by Alphonsus de Liguori, explicitly mentions Marian worship in the fifth stanza of the hymn. She is depicted as “Queen,” whom all things worship. If Jesus spoke the truth, and He did, there is zero security and salvation in Mary and the Rosary. Embroidered inside all of Pope John Paul’s robes was the phrase, “*Totus tuus sum Maria*,” which means, “Mary, I am all yours.”

It is obvious, then, that not only did the late pope worship Mary and place his eternal security in her, but it is equally obvious that “the faithful” follow in his footsteps, as they have previous popes, by worshipping Mary. When Catholics turn from faith in Messiah Jesus *alone* for salvation in Mary and the Rosary, as did Pope John Paul II, they place their eternal salvation in jeopardy, for Jesus Himself declared, “*No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6). Jesus either spoke the truth or He lied.

MARY AND THE EARLY BELIEVERS

It has already been observed, according to heaven’s testimony, that the mother of Jesus was a privileged and holy woman, a virgin, whom God honored by impregnating her with His Holy Spirit. Indeed, she was an exceptional servant of God, as were many other women. But especially Mary, for she was chosen to bear the Savior

“The Blessed Virgin Mary”

of the world. Even the angel who told her the Good News called her “*O favored one*” (Luke 1:28), and the Holy Spirit, through Elizabeth, said, “*Blessed are you among women*” (Luke 1:42).

But that’s the end of it. Catholics should understand that no idolatrous tributes were ever given to Mary by the early harbingers of the Good News. A few days after Jesus’ resurrection and appearance, the Eleven, “together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His [fleshly] brothers,” came together in an upper room and “with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer” (Acts 1:12-14).

What is so special about this occasion? *It is that Mary is not the center of attention.* If you are of the Roman Catholic faith, you must wonder *why* Mary was not sanctified (set apart), idolized, and bowed down to. *But no!* She is simply one of many who had gathered in an upper room to pray. Even after the Christian order was launched, she is never chronicled as the “star” of any event.

I find this a little strange, considering how the Vatican and her devotees revere her, adore her, pray to her, and place their allegiance in her—as has already been shown. To put it another way, Catholicism’s beliefs and practices relating to Mary are as far detached from the divine testimony as the North Pole is from the South Pole. But that’s the history of this renegade church.

SIGHTINGS OF MARY BUT NONE OF JESUS!

On the CBS local News a few months ago, it was reported that a woman, whose blender went haywire and splattered some of its ingredients onto the wall, saw in the splattered ingredients a profile of “The Blessed Virgin Mary.” A few months ago, a “well-balanced” and “insightful explorer” saw Mary’s face on a tree

“The Blessed Virgin Mary”

trunk. Others have seen her in the clouds, on donuts and cookie sheets, and in rainbows. I would not be surprised if someone told me that these enthusiasts with rabid imaginations escaped from the local Zoo—or perhaps ran away from the nearest Funny Farm.

There’s no end to these sightings. Some of the promoters of these phantom sightings are making big bucks by charging a fee to see them. And the gullible keep coming and keep paying. Satan is laughing all the way to Hades and back.

But one of the most spectacular of these sightings occurred regularly over the dome of the *Coptic Orthodox Church* (not *Roman Catholic*) in Zeitoun (Cairo), Egypt between 1968 and 1970. The “apparition”—ghost or phantom—lasted from a few minutes to a few hours on each occasion. During the span of time “she” was supposed to have appeared, hundreds of thousands came to view this “extraordinary marvel,” including the then President of Egypt. Reflections resembling doves seemed to have fluttered above her.

I have viewed the photos and read the stories relating to this unusual occurrence. Most everyone will agree that something “floated” over the large dome, and even *seemed* to have walked around on it. The photos depict something *glowing* in the shape of a configuration that might be construed as a human form. But the form is *ambiguous* and *unverifiable*. Allow me to repeat myself: *The form is ambiguous and unverifiable*. Those persons looking for “The Holy Blessed Virgin Mary” saw her. Those Muslims looking for a profile of their “Divine Prophet” saw him. Atheists probably saw an alien from outer space and the “doves” as little UFOs. Mormons could claim they saw an outline of Joseph Smith, their cult founder. Others saw nothing.

“The Blessed Virgin Mary”

Roman Catholics and their gurus promote this event as authentic. I find that odd, because it did not occur over a *Roman Catholic Church* structure. Instead, it appeared over a *Coptic Orthodox Church* structure. And the Orthodox and Roman sects are not one and the same. If the Roman Catholic apparatus is what Jesus founded, why did Mary appear over an Orthodox structure?

As alluded to already, the figuration over the dome cannot be—and never has been—*conclusively* identified. If the form was supposed to represent a person, heavenly or earthly, *who* was that person? It could have been anyone. But since Roman Catholics see their “hero” and idol in just about everything, they claim it was “The Blessed Virgin Mary.” No one living on earth today knows what Jesus’ mother looked like. And her *facial* features are not described in scripture. Consequently, no one is able to authenticate any of the numerous “sightings” as portraying Mary—or *any other person*.

Let’s toss a coin. Heads she’s Mary, tails she’s the wicked Jezebel of the Old Testament scriptures (1 Kings 18:4). Or maybe Satan himself dressed up like a female.

How do I feel about all of this? My gut feeling, based on what I have seen and read, is that the whole thing was trickery and quackery, and Satan was behind it all. If Satan has the power to deceive the gullible, he also has the power to manipulate them into delusions. I worked with psychiatric patients for decades, and I have seen hundreds of them who persistently maintained a delusional belief in spite of evidence to the contrary.

Furthermore, for those who are seeking “revelations” *outside* of God’s intended purposes, and those who refuse to love and accept

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truth, “*God will send them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned*” (2 Thess. 2:9-12).

I claim that those who have allegedly seen or been in the presence of “The Blessed Virgin Mary,” since her passing 2,000 years ago, are suffering from delusions. Either that or they have developed ferocious fantasies. And that includes the *Fatima* and *Lourdes* sightings, the stories of which will curl your hair.

Popes and their clerical puppets could make a fortune by writing science fiction novels. They’re in the wrong business! *Example:* One of the children in the *Fatima* fairytale, Jacinta, who died in 1920, was supposedly exhumed in 1935 and again in 1951, and her body was found *incorrupt* both times! Even Hollywood is incapable of topping this science fiction yarn.

But getting back to the Egypt sightings, if the actual form of Mary appeared over the dome, we are then compelled to inquire: *Since God’s Son is the answer to all of our trials and troubles and frustrations and questions, why would God send the Son’s earthly mother to appear over a church’s dome instead of His Son?* After all, in this final era, God’s principal Informant to humankind is His Son, not the Son’s mother. “*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things*” (Heb. 1:1-2).

Furthermore, in spite of God’s granting Mary the unique favor of bearing His Son, she is not now, never was, nor ever will be, a mediator between God and man. Only Jesus has been granted that favor. “*For there is one God and one mediator between God and*

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men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). Yet Catholics pray to Mary and even expect her to intercede on their behalf. Jesus is set aside.

The Glories of Mary by Alphonsus de Liguori, as alluded to earlier, explicitly mentions Marian worship in the fifth stanza of the hymn, “*Mary, Virgin of Virgins*” (page 589):

*“Queen thou art, whom all things worship,
Earth and hell, and heaven above;
But thy heart o'erflows with goodness,
Just and sinners feel thy love.”*

Since Liguori’s book bears both the *nihil obstat* and the *imprimatur* (Latin for “*Let it be printed*”), it shouldn’t contain anything objectionable to the Roman Catholic Church’s Teaching Magisterium. Besides, Liguori not only bears the title of “saint,” but also was designated a doctor (outstanding teacher) by Pope Pious IX in 1871.

ENDNOTE: You will notice that in all of these “sightings,” not *once* did anyone see Jesus! I find that extraordinarily irregular, for He is the Pioneer and Author of our salvation. Why Mary and not Jesus? It is because Mary has been idolized. Idolatry within the confines of Roman Catholicism is like a raging river. The following Chapter will address this problem.

INFALLIBILITY: The Infallibility of popes, or any other contemporary religious leader, is a creed undocumented and unsupported by heaven, just as infallibility is not inbred in the “Twelve [bogus] Apostles” of the Mormon cult in Salt Lake City, Utah, in spite of their spurious claims.

PERSONAL SENTIMENT: We are no longer addicted to church meetings. They are boring, artificial, and too programmed. House meetings are far more uplifting, and freedom is free!

Chapter 6

IMAGES – IDOLS – STATUES

vs.

The God of Creation

“Therefore watch yourselves very carefully, so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman” (Deut. 4:15-16).

The children of Israel were not receptive of God’s tutoring. Over and over they navigated away from their Creator in favor of gods made in the likeness of created things—wood, stone, metal, living and dead entities. God often gave them up to their own follies and allowed their enemies to carry them into exile.

After a long period of serving their captors, they would cry out to the Lord for deliverance. Being the merciful and compassionate God that He is, He would hear their cry and deliver them. But like a wayward child or a rebellious spouse, they would turn again to the “gods before them.”

This is the history of God’s once favorite people. The first recorded martyr of the Christian faith, Steven, had it right when he said to the Jews who had placed him on trial for proclaiming the Good News:

“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?” (Acts 7:51-53).

During his defense, he looked up to heaven and said, *“Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God”* (v. 56). They were so outraged they cast him out of

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the city, and while they were stoning this righteous man to death, “*he fell to his knees and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep*” (7:59-60).

Steven died at the hands of God’s once chosen people—the same people who habitually ignored God’s instructions and bowed down to and served lifeless idols, statues, and images.

Here it is the 21st century. Has the scene changed? If not, has God changed *His* mind about erecting idols, statues and images and bowing down to them? No, *not until hell freezes over*. There were no statues in the meeting places of the early believers, and none in Catholic structures *prior* to 325 A. D.

- **“To avoid even the appearance of idolatry, no statues were placed in the early churches”** (*Short History of the Catholic Church*, p. 65).

According to historical sources, the first edifice built for religious purposes was not erected until about 200 A. D., in Alexandria, Egypt, after which the deathbed of Christianity became even more conspicuous—for Jesus said to “get out and go,” but believers came in to stay. As a result, edifices became yet another image to honor, to venerate, to esteem, to revere, to adore.

- **“The whole tradition of venerating holy images gradually and naturally developed”** (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VII, p. 667).

I want to quote that scripture again—the one I tendered at the outset. Take another look at it, please.

“Therefore watch yourselves very carefully, so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any

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shape, whether formed like a man or a woman” (Deut. 4:15-16).

Common logic tells us that God is not talking about images and statues and sculptures of a political and historical kind. The statue of Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D.C. is not the subject. Nor the statue of Devil Ance Hatfield, clan leader in the *Hatfield-McCoy Feud*, located in the *Appalachian Mountains* of Kentucky and West Virginia. Nor is God talking about the image of Caesar on Roman coins, which Jesus spoke about in His day (Matt. 22:15-22).

God is speaking of the images and statues and idols that are fashioned for *religious purposes!* When statues or idols of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the apostles or anyone else are made for *religious purposes*, spiritual corruption and idolatry are the result. So says the God of creation. Within the confines of Catholicism, and occasionally Protestantism, are found all of the above. If this is not idolatry, I've lost my senses. “*You shall not bow down to them or worship them*” (Gen.20:5).

I would ask my Catholic friends: *What part of this don't you understand?* Even the Catholic Bible portrays God condemning images, statues, and idols that are made for religious purposes. Yet Catholics violate the same scriptures they claim to support. Many Protestant sects are guilty as well.

But what about religious paintings? If I were to install a religious painting in a church structure, or in some other meeting place, or in my home, for *religious purposes*, as statues and images are installed in Catholic Churches, and bow down to and revere it—*yes*, that would be worship or veneration. And that is *precisely* what has occurred among Catholics and their statutes and images.

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Or another note, if I were to get down upon my knees in front of a religious painting and pray to it, as Catholics pray to their statues and images, I would be worshipping. The nucleus of the whole matter is that our Catholic friends *do* worship their images. The image of “The Blessed Virgin Mary” is the most popular. Pope John Paul II worshipped the image of Mary, as confirmed in a previous Chapter.

“But I don’t bow down to the statue or image, I bow down to God!” How often have we heard that rationale? I find the statement rather outlandish, because those who affirm it bow down only—particularly “in church”—when a statue is in their presence. If they’re bowing down to God only, why do they wait until they’re facing a statue? Their affirmation would be rejected in any Court of Law, and is most certainly rejected by the Court of Heaven.

But is there’s no difference between what Catholics do and what Protestants do when they (Protestants) get down upon their knees to pray?

There’s a world of difference. I will not defend Protestantism, as I believe she is an offspring of the “Unholy See,” but most Protestants bow and get down upon their knees to pray to a *live* and *active* God. Catholics bow, cross themselves, and pray to a lifeless, spiritless, and hollow piece of earthen material. Surely we can see the difference.

“You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them” (Exodus 20:4-5).

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Protestants and Catholics have trampled upon this injunction and are guilty of the very thing God condemned—*idolatry*. Have we forgotten Paul’s visit to Athens, Greece? The record says, “*While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols*” (Acts 17:16).

To give this passage a modern-day twist, “*While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of church edifices, statues, images, and other articles of worship.*”

God says again, “*Do not turn to idols or make gods of cast metal for yourselves*” (Lev. 19:4). “*Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land and bow down to it*” (Lev. 26:1).

The act of bowing down to images and figurines and statues is no different than my going to a ravine and talking and bowing down to a bed of rocks, or picking up a tree trunk, placing it upon a large stone, and bowing down to it as though it were something holy.

The first time “worship” is mentioned in the scriptures is in Genesis 22:5. The Hebrew definition of “worship” in this passage is “to bow down.” This means that anytime we bow down to any object for the purpose of revering it in a spiritual sense, we are worshipping that article. Yet God says that we are not to bow down to them. Why religionists are so intent on doing the opposite of what God says is indeed a mystery.

WHY DID GOD BURY MOSES?

“Go up into the Abarim Range, to Mount Nebo, across from Jeri-

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cho, and view Canaan, the land I am giving the Israelites as their own possession. There on the mountain you have climbed you will die and be gathered to your people” (Deut. 32:48-50).

“So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord, and He buried him...but no one knows the place of his burial to this day...And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses” (Deut. 34:5-10).

Why did God bury Moses? A fascinating question. He was not left for his people to bury, the usual burial custom of the Israelites. It is not revealed *why* God Himself buried the great leader of Israel and arbitrator of the Old Covenant. All we can offer are our thoughts and speculations.

My personal persuasion is that if Moses’ burial had been left up to his people, they would have built a monument or statue in his honor and bowed down to and worshipped it. I base that conjecture on Israel’s history of idolatry and her tendency to bow down to and worship inorganic images and icons.

Remember the golden calf? Moses’ trek on the Mountain of God was delayed. The children of Israel felt they needed a “god to go before them,” so Aaron, Moses’ brother, made them an idol in the shape of a calf and they corrupted themselves by bowing down to it. As Moses descended the mountain, God told him:

“They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol in the shape of a calf and have bowed down to it” (Exodus 32:8-10).

When Moses arrived in the camp, he burned the idol, ground it

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into powder, scattered it upon the water and made the Israelites drink the bitter liquid. This is how God felt about their statues. And if Moses were here on earth today and discovered all of the statues (idols) of “The Blessed Virgin Mary” and other religious icons, which the papacy and liberal Protestant sects have promoted for centuries, his anger would be kindled just as strongly.

There’s another question related to this subject. Why did the devil dispute with the Archangel Michael about the body of Moses, as recorded in Jude 9? (God buried Moses *through* His Archangel Michael.) “There arose a dispute between the devil and Michael over Moses’ body.”

Did the devil know something he wasn’t telling? It is my deduction that Satan knew in advance that the children of Israel, if left to bury their leader, would eventually build an idol of him and bow down to and worship it. Consequently, a squabble arose between the prince of darkness and God’s angelic envoy, Michael, over his body.

Idolatrous worship has not changed through the centuries. Man still builds idols “to go before them.” Take a good look at our fancy church edifices. Believers are not content to allow the God of creation to pave their way through the trials of life. They need something they can see, touch, feel, bow down to, and place their allegiance in. The great apostle Paul said it far better than I can say it when he accused idolaters of “exchanging the truth of God for a lie, and worshipping and serving *created things* rather than the Creator” (Rom. 1:25).

Remember the pope’s illness in February, 2005? I marveled at the homage and allegiance tendered him. The media and many

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Catholic leaders called him “Holy Father,” a blasphemous term when applied to a mere man. Even Peter, who is falsely alleged to have been the first pope, was never called “Holy Father.” Not even the Son of God carried that divine title. God, and *only* God, is ever referred to as Holy Father (John 17:11). Yet a mere man in Rome has adopted that noble title! It is appalling, to say the least.

So, yes, it seems that God Himself officiated at the burial of His servant Moses to prevent the children of Israel from building an idol of him and bowing down to it. Sadly, however, even today idols and images are still created and bowed down to. But God will have the last word.

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them and serve them” (Exodus 20:4-5).

“Beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, whether in the likeness of male or female, and bow down to them and serve them” (Deut. 4:16-19).

HOUSEHOLD FIGURINES & CROSSES

It has been argued that paintings, statues, crosses, icons, images, and figurines in church structures are no different than having them in our homes. “They can uplift our spirit and draw us closer to the Lord,” the argument goes.

I have no objections to hanging an artist’s conception of Jesus, or even Mary, in our homes—or hanging miniature religious icons on our walls or displaying them elsewhere. But to bow down to

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them as though they can spiritually uplift one's walk with the Lord, as Catholics do, is an entirely different scene. To even consider them *spiritual* in any sense is bordering idolatry. My wife, a former Catholic, has a few figurines in the house, but she does not now consider them religiously special or holy, and she does not bow down to them or revere them.

In short, I do not endorse *earthen* icons of any kind that are deemed spiritually uplifting, whether crosses, miniature statues, church edifices, or any other representation. They cannot, *on any level*, take the place of trusting in and serving the Lord Jesus. None of these objects embodies the essential characteristics of true spirituality. They are futile in our walk with the Lord.

The only Beings who can uplift my spirit and draw me to a closer walk with heaven's glories are God the Father and Jesus His Son. I bow down before no other! I place my allegiance in no other! That's my story and that's my song. If your story and your song carry a message foreign to this one, do not expect me to adopt it.

All of the religious tokens and emblems on Planet Earth, whether crosses, church palaces and their "Sanctuaries," statues, figurines, or paintings, are just that—*tokens*. Not one of them can land us on heaven's shores. The reasons are obvious: They cannot see, feel, communicate, show emotions, make decisions, or uplift our spirit. They are as useless in helping us reach heaven as a bag of pinto beans or a basket of spoiled cucumbers. *Away with them!*

All Catholics—and some Protestants—render spiritual tribute to images and statues. To deny this fact is to adopt the biggest falsehood ever told—even bigger than when Satan told Eve, "You

shall not surely die.”

STATUE OF MARY vs. STATUE OF LIBERTY

You may have heard of a “Father” Fernando Suarez, a Filipino Catholic priest who resides in Canada. He has been traversing much of the globe parroting his supernatural gift to heal. I connected to his Web site and read about him and quite a few of the testimonials.

The testimonials are quite similar to the Oral Roberts testimonials of past decades in that there is nothing supernaturally spectacular about them. One person said her right thumb was healed of tendinitis; another wrote that she was healed of a low white blood count and incontinence of urine. “Father” Fernando healed another of kidney stones, another of mental illness (she still has to take her medication, however!), and still another of bowel problems and diarrhea.

If God has conferred upon this man the supernatural gift of healing, as He did the apostles and others during the formative years of the redeemed community, he should be able to cause the blind to see, the lame to walk, and to even restore life. But none of these miraculous signs accompany his “healing” campaigns. Place this “Father” Fernando Suarez alongside Oral Roberts and we have twins, as “birds of a feather flock together.” The apostle Paul had a few interesting things to say about “Faith Healing Swindlers” and the way they operate.

“For we [apostles] are not peddlers of God’s word” (2 Cor. 2:17). These peddlers “imagine that godliness is a means of [financial] gain” (1 Tim. 6:5). They do “counterfeit miracles and wonders and are filled with all wicked deception” (2 Thess. 2:1-12).

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But I'm not here to spend a lot of time discussing this man's counterfeit healings. I want to call your attention to his goal and what he intends to do with his riches.

He is so delighted with the success of his "healing" ministries that he's going to take some of the proceeds he has solicited from the suckers who flock to his "healing" exhibitions and construct a statue of the "The Blessed Virgin Mary" on a large tract of land overlooking Batangas Bay in the Philippines. It will be almost as tall as the *Statue of Liberty*. Filipino Catholics will then have their own "Golden Calf" to bow down to.

Now why do you suppose the apostle Peter didn't think of that? He could have gone down in history as another "Peter Pan" who built a statue of "The Blessed Virgin Mary" in "Never-Never Land." Or he could have erected a statue of himself. I can almost see his name engraved into the shrine:

Pope Simon Peter I **Apostolic Head of The Church**

Whether in the Philippines or inside her grand palaces, the Vatican's idols are reminiscent of paganism. Her doctrines are eerie and her rituals "spooky." If my Lord Jesus is the author of this bizarre system of religion, there's no hope for any of us. She is the mother of apostates, the mother of sects, and the "death-cause" of true Christianity.

The Roman Catholic system of religion was devised, not by a righteous God who destroyed whole cities that had wallowed in perverted sex (Gen. 19), but by the satanic forces of evil, corruption, and bloodshed. *Authorized Catholic Encyclopedias* validate my

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charges. These matters are part of the Vatican's history, and will always be a part of her history. It is Catholicism against itself.

INFO-NOTES: "The nobleman went to the church, and on seeing the figure of Mary, he felt himself, as it were, invited by her to cast himself at her feet and trust. He hastens to do so, kisses her feet, and Mary, from the statue, extended her hand for him to kiss" (*The Glories of Mary*, p. 232).

A Crucifix talked to "St. Francis" and told him, "*Go, Francis, and repair my house, which as you see is falling into ruin*" (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VI, p. 222).

"An image bowed its head to St. John Gaulbert while he *kneeled and prayed* before it" (*Butler's Lives of the Saints*, p. 247).

"Eusebius of Caesarea [died 340], the Father of Church History must be counted among the enemies of icons. In several places in his history, he shows his dislike for them. They are a 'heathen custom'; he wrote many arguments to persuade Constantine's sister, Constantia, not to keep a statue of our Lord" (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VII. p. 669).

POSTSCRIPT: While in Washington, D.C. on a recent visit, I was viewing the statue of Abraham Lincoln when he extended both feet and asked me to tie his shoes. Out of fear of being seen as someone who escaped from "Never-Never Land," I hesitated. But he insisted.

Chapter 7

THE CULT OF ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Life for many of us is so hollow we grasp for the first straw that passes our way. We seek some new concept with which to identify. Many of us wind up with cults or counterfeit movements that rob us of volition, money, real estate, and self-respect. For our unquestioning allegiance, they promise us “pie in the sky when we die,” a high-priestly seat on a planet somewhere in the universe, or a safe deliverance from purgatory. In the end, the movement’s leaders succeed in capturing and enslaving us. This is called “brainwashing” or “mind control.”

It isn’t necessary that a group or movement be entirely religious, or even religious at all, to qualify as a cult. It can even be pagan. There are certain traits that help us establish whether a group or movement is *wholly* cultic, *partly* cultic, or *non*-cultic. I want to advance what I feel are some of the features which are common with all cults. A bona-fide cult may not possess all of them. Indeed, rarely do we find one that carries all of the symptoms. But each has enough of them, particularly the principal ones, to be certified a cult.

Is it fair to categorize all churches or denominations as cults? Where do we draw the line, if at all? And whose standard of measurement should we use? A genuine cult to one man is his salvation and blanket of security. To another man, the same cult is dangerous and should be shunned. One man considers his circle of fellowship as having begun with heaven’s approval and blessings. Another man judges the same group cultist and affirms that its leaders are interested only in money, power, prestige, and control.

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Try convincing a Jehovah's Witness that *The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society* of Brooklyn, New York is a cult that controls and manipulates his thinking and he will most likely laugh in your face. Or try to assure a Mormon that Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, was schizophrenic and a false prophet and he will call you a religious bigot. And don't ruffle Tom Cruse's cult!

If you care not to be labeled "anti-Messiah," don't tell a member of *The Unification Church* that "Reverend Moon" is a counterfeit messiah. And assuming you don't wish to be scoffed at, you may want to think twice before telling an enthusiast of the *New Age Movement* that his religion is idolatrous because he worships *creation* rather than the Creator.

And on and on we go. Surely there must be traits that will help us determine whether or not a particular group is full-blooded or half cult. I'm convinced there are. Two of the definitions *Webster* offers of a cult are:

- "An exclusive group of persons sharing an esoteric interest."
- "Obsessive devotion to a person, principle, or ideal."

"Well, now," the observer retorts, "if obsessive devotion to a person makes one cultic, *all* Christians are cultic, for they are obsessively devoted to Jesus." Good point, so let's clarify and define the proposition.

Allegiance and devotion to any *human* person, or to any *human* principle, or to any *human* standard as a means of eternal salvation is cultism.

I believe this clarification will stand the test of opposition, and on that principle I affirm that *any* movement, sect, church, re-

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ligious party, or denomination that falls into this classification is either wholly cultic or partly cultic. Having stated this premise, I now want to list a number of cultic characteristics. The following marks of distinction are not listed in order of importance, but are chosen randomly.

- *The group's leaders claim to be God's prophets or messiahs or apostles who receive "divine revelations."*
- *They have a scrupulous fixation about some deceased mortal or current human leader—a person viewed as the paramount figure in their religious party and doctrinal platform.*
- *They teach that all other churches and groups are "out of the loop" unless they surrender what they have and join them.*
- *They claim to have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.*
- *New members are expected to attend study sessions where they are firmly indoctrinated with the group's mundane creeds and human traditions.*
- *They resent having their doctrines and creeds questioned.*
- *They believe salvation and afterlife are found only in their camp.*
- *Those who oppose and defect the group are judged evil and called heretics.*

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- *They “dictate” by rigid indoctrination almost every aspect of their members’ belief system.*
- *They deny that God has faithful children scattered over the hills and valleys of sectarianism.*
- *They believe God’s elect are found only within the borders of their own enclosure.*
- *Honest dissidents are disciplined, excommunicated, avoided, and regarded as apostates and heretics.*
- *They insist on strict conformity to the group’s doctrinal standards.*
- *Their source of authority is of human origin or based on the traditions of their “church fathers.”*
- *They require a new convert to be rebaptized, even though the candidate was sincerely baptized previously.*
- *Members are expected to give large amounts of money and ample energy and time to the group’s activities.*
- *Their clerics and chieftains claim to be the only legitimate interpreters of scripture.*
- *They wrest scripture to foster their belief system, and their teachings contradict plain truth.*
- *They believe theirs is the only church founded by Jesus and His apostles.*

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There are other cultic marks unknown to this scribe, but these are sufficient to establish our premise.

MAKING THE APPLICATION

Most of us agree that these “earmarks” are applicable to eccentric groups like the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Unification Church, The Way International, Transcendental Meditation Movement, and many other bizarre religious movements. But the real question we need to address:

Does the Roman Catholic Church fit into this configuration?

If not, *why not?* Look at the cultic traits again. Most if not all of them are features that are deeply-rooted in Roman Catholicism’s anatomy. Here are *seven* of the many that speak *directly* of this apostate institution:

- **The group’s leaders claim to be God’s prophets or messiahs or apostles who receive “divine revelations.”**
- **They have a scrupulous fixation about some deceased mortal or current human leader—a person viewed as the paramount figure in their religious party and doctrinal platform.**
- **They teach that all other churches and groups are “out of the loop” unless they surrender what they have and join them.**
- **They claim to have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.**
- **Those who oppose and defect the group are judged evil and called heretics.**
- **Their source of authority is of human origin or based on the traditions of their “church fathers.”**
- **They believe theirs is the only church founded by Jesus and His apostles.**

I would ask disciples of the Roman Catholic Church, and mainly

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her prelates, a question or two:

1. *Do you agree the cultic traits, or at least most of them, I have mentioned are characteristic of cults such as the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and many others?*
2. *If yes, why would they not be equally characteristic of the Roman Catholic Church?*

After all, these features are an integral part of the Roman Church. A cult will never admit to being a cult, so I really don't expect the Roman Catholic Church to "go to confession" and admit to being a cult, any more than I expect the "Twelve Apostles" of the Mormon cult to admit that their "Latter Day Saint Church" is a cult.

Most contemporary cults are not physically or militarily aggressive. But when we ponder other forms of injury and abuse they bring to bear upon their followers, they're as guilty as those who use guns and knives. Judgment of the severest kind awaits those self-proclaimed prophets, messiahs, and money-mongers who twist innocent minds and deceive receptive and hungry hearts.

NON-CULTIC TRAITS

To approach this issue from another angle, and to further confirm that Roman Catholicism is a cult, the following *non-cultic* traits are *not*—I repeat—*are not* relevant to the Church under study.

- *Money, elaborate edifices, plush offices, power, and control do not occupy their time and energy.*
- *They see themselves as only part of the one body of believ-*

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ers, and that wherever God has a child they have a sibling.

- *They do not claim to have truth cornered or God corralled.*
- *They comfortably acknowledge their doctrinal errors and weaknesses, and believe God shames the proud but extends grace to the humble.*
- *They are believers only, but not the only believers.*
- *They place their confidence in Messiah Jesus only, not in flesh and blood or palpable organizations, and not in the traditions of men.*
- *They accept all of those God accepts, and they love those the world hates.*
- *They do not seek public recognition or fear public scrutiny.*
- *They do not make unrealistic claims or promote ridiculous agendas.*
- *They see Jesus as their only Chief Shepherd, healer, redeemer, and peacemaker, not some conspirator or false apostle.*

If the Vatican's Apologists repudiate the traits I have advanced, I invite them to compose their own list. I would suggest, however, that their list fall within the *legal* boundaries of definitions pertaining to "cults," or the *generally recognized* definitions. If they follow this route, they will wind up placing Catholicism against itself—a fact the historical evidence establishes.

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As a reminder, let it be said that virtually all of my quotations have been lifted from *approved* Catholic publications and books, which received the *imprimatur* (Latin for “let it be printed”) of a Bishop, Archbishop, or Cardinal.

“No book treating on religion (de rebus sacris) can be published till it has been examined by the Bishop’s orders and received his imprimatur” (Cath. Dic., Addis & Arnold, p. 85).

IN A NUTSHELL

In closing this Chapter, I want to consolidate everything up to this point. I ask you to review the following items carefully for their authenticity, based upon the data that has been presented.

- **The Roman Catholic Church’s genesis cannot be traced back to the first century A. D.**
- **As an apostate system, she developed gradually and began to be seen as a *visible* entity in the second and third centuries A. D.**
- **She has a colorful history—one that is pregnant with immorality, sexual perversions, child molestations, and doctrinal corruptions.**
- **She is half-pagan and almost zero-authentic true Christianity.**
- **She is the apostate system the apostle Paul predicted would develop and promote all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders.**
- **There is not, nor has there ever been, any religious machine in history that is pertinent to Paul’s prophecies except Roman Catholicism.**
- **There were no Popes, Cardinals, or Archbishops in the first century A. D.**

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- **Peter is never referred to as a pope or the “Bishop of Rome.”**
- **Peter could not have been a pope because the apostle Paul “condemned and opposed him to his face” (Gal. 2:11-12). If either one was a pope, it was Paul!**
- **The Catholic Church and her leaders violate the same scriptures they profess to have written.**
- **The New Covenant scriptures were composed by the apostles and first century believers, *not* by Roman Catholics. Roman Catholics were non-existent until centuries later.**
- **The scriptures were composed two to three centuries *prior* to Catholicism’s visible entry.**
- **The scriptures were *not* framed by Protestants, either, for they did not surface until Roman Catholicism gave birth to them.**

INFO-NOTE: Cardinal Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles, as noted in a previous Chapter, is under investigation for covering up the sexual abuses of his priests. If found guilty, he should be sent to prison for the remainder of his life—unless, of course, he is made pope in the meantime!

EXPELLING JEWS: Pope Leo VII (936-939) expelled Jews from the cities because they refused to become Catholics (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. IX, p. 160).

CATHOLIC INQUISITION: “They caused many citizens in their domains, nobles and commoners, clerics, knights, peasants, spinsters, widows, and married women, to be burnt alive, confiscated their property, and divided it between them” (*Cath. Ency.*, Vol. VIII. p. 29).

Chapter 8

MARY *“Perpetual Virgin”*

Of all the uncanny—and forged—doctrines disseminated by the Roman Catholic Church and her Apologists is the one that claims Mary was always a virgin. The doctrine collides head-on with heaven. Rather than belabor the issue with many words, we will allow the Holy Spirit to settle the controversy.

“Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? Are not all his sisters with us? (Matt. 13:55-56).

“And His mother and His brothers came, and standing outside they sent to Him and called Him. And the crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, ‘You mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you’ (Mark 3:31-32).

“Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” (Mark 6:3).

“Then His mother and His brothers came to Him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd” (Luke 8:19).

“Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?” (1 Cor. 9:5).

Even *The Catholic Living Bible* teaches that Mary had numerous other children besides the Son of God.

Mary: “Perpetual Virgin”

“He’s just a carpenter’s son, and we know Mary his mother and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. And his sisters—they all live here” (Matt. 13:55-56, *The Catholic Living Bible*).

No, these were not *adopted* children. They were the blood—biological—children of Joseph and Mary. The male and female children of Mary, whom she gave birth to during the years following the birth of God’s Son, were *genetically* related to her. This truth cannot be twisted out of shape or distorted by those whose allegiance is placed in human theories, traditions, and pagan customs.

Yet in spite of this divine evidence, the “Unholy See” continues to advocate the perpetual virginity of Mary. The dogma is paganism, not Christianity. And it translates into Catholicism against itself.

INFO-NOTES: “St. Bernard,” “St. Thomas,” and “St. Augustine” did not endorse the doctrine of Immaculate Conception (*Cath. Dic.*, pgs. 428 & 431).

PURGATORY: “Still the doctrine was not fully established in the West till the time of Gregory the Great,” which would make it 590 A. D. (*Cath. Dic.*, p. 706).

Chapter 9

WHY I LEFT THE ESTABLISHMENT BEHIND

The need to clarify and specify never ends. Ideas, views, issues, and philosophies are not always communicated effectively. This venture is to define my position on several questions and to include a little background along with it.

As a whole host problems within the Christian commonwealth may be laid at the feet of poor and ineffective communication, I hope to be able to speak clearly and distinctly during this experience with words. I'm not sure I can satisfy my critics. My eagerness to do so finds solace in the maxim that no man is able to appease all of his critics. If my approach to these matters makes for greater understanding and brotherhood, my efforts will not have been wasted.

RELEASED FROM SLAVERY

A few decades ago, I was set free from partisan religion. The experience was invigorating! As I sought freedom from spiritual slavery—"churchitis"—the Lord operated upon my heart and modified my course. It was a simple but serious procedure. The only prerequisites were that I cast aside my sectarian, partisan shackles and open my mind and heart. In essence, I was deprogrammed.

Did I leave Messiah Jesus when I abandoned organized religion—the institutional church? Goodness, no! He and I are closer now than ever before. As a result of my surrendering institutional religion in favor of freedom, I am now a "believer at large," free-thinker, and one of God's instruments for reform. No

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human being and no partisan group or church does my thinking for me any longer. I arrive at conclusions after careful evaluation, study, and prayer. Simply stated, I have cast aside the chains of religious orthodoxy and abandoned the Establishment's *status quo*.

I'm not formally identified with any church or religious party. *I'm a free man*. With the Spirit's direction, I think independently and I arrive at my conclusions independently, regardless of what Calvin, Campbell, Wesley, Luther, Pope John Paul II and all the others taught. Neither man is my polar star. My Polar Star is Jesus—none other. Consequently, no one may preside over my concepts and teachings insofar as dictating my walk with the Lord.

I will gladly absorb and happily accept advice from godly men if it coincides with what I conscientiously believe is truth and understand as heaven's grace. But I will no longer bow my knees to the "powers that be" of the religious bureaucracy. I will no longer be enslaved by the institutional church or religious Establishment or organized religion.

Organized religion? Yes, but let me explain. I believe in an organized life. I believe the believer should have his priorities organized. I believe in an organized mind and an organized schedule. Organization, of itself, is gratifying and necessary. But I have problems with organizational structures and programs and projects within the body of believers that have supplanted the simple, informal but serious life depicted in the lives of early believers.

Literally, and in this vein, we have organized ourselves out of practical existence. Overall, our programs, projects, and organizations have deflated our capabilities and our enthusiasm to

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reach the unreached. “Jesus said to get out and go, but we have come in to stay” (W. Carl Ketcherside, *Mission Messenger*).

In essence, we have permitted our internal organizations and materialistic projects to strangle us. There’s no room, no time, and no money for the resurrection message. Our fancy edifices, palaces, polished organizations, and programs are symptoms of our pride, digression, and apostasy. Hundreds of millions of dollars are wasted on “materialistic evangelism” while millions of the world’s poor go hungry, not only for food but also for the message of salvation. Our priorities are abused and misplaced. We have taken the simple arrangement of communicating the Good News to others and developed it into a complicated mess.

TESTIMONY OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS

The sect-ridden system called “The Church”—Catholic and Protestant—is no longer influential or impressive. She has lost her ability to relate to the human predicament. Abraham Lincoln relied heavily on God but leaned away from the religious Establishment. He described his relationship with contemporary religion by saying:

“Christianity is not my religion. I could never give assent to the long complicated statements of Christian dogma.”

Thomas Jefferson had an insightful view of the whole mess when he scribed:

“The greatest enemies of Jesus are the doctrines and creeds of the church. It would be more pardonable to believe in no God at all than to blaspheme Him by the atrocious writings of the [church] theologians.”

He further announced that he had “sworn upon the altar of God,

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eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.” Needless to say, Jefferson included the various institutions of religion when he referred to “tyranny over the mind of man.”

John Adams alluded to the religious order as so much “baggage” when he wrote:

“Nowhere in the Gospels do we find a precept for Creeds, Confessions, Oaths, Doctrines, and whole carloads of other foolish trumpery that we find Christianity encumbered with.”

James Madison spoke of the “fruits” of orthodox religions as ignorance, arrogance and servility in the laity, superstition, bigotry, and persecution. But long before our founding fathers came upon the scene, Martin Luther, the Catholic defector, insightfully concluded that the “greatest threat to the cause of Jesus always arises from those who lay claim to being his children.” Gandhi of India proclaimed that “Christianity is the greatest enemy of Jesus Christ” (*Google*: “Quotes on Religion from our Founding Fathers”).

Regardless of the religious persuasion or spiritual status of these men, the underscoring factor is that our founding fathers—plus other leaders—looked upon the splintered estate of partisan religion with discontent. Judging from their words, they must have felt that the schismatic plight, the endless and ghostly rituals, the never-ending symbols, and the clerical jargon of sectarian religions had no meaningful message for a troubled world. If Lincoln could have had his way, he might have re-shaped, reformed, and even reversed “Christianity” in an effort to rid it of excess baggage.

IMPACTING THE WORLD

The early believers won the world without theological seminaries, missionary societies, clergy, Roman Catholics, Protestants, or any

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of the other “artifacts” and baggage that burden us today. They changed lifestyles without throwing a rock, burning a building, drawing a sword, or parading down Main Street in Jerusalem with weirdoes and long-haired losers.

Their resurrection message to the unregenerate was simple, “*Repent, and turn to God!*” The new reign welcomed everyone—yes, even homosexuals and prostitutes and drunkards and thieves and swindlers. In the congregation at Corinth, there were recovering homosexuals, prostitutes, thieves, drunkards, and swindlers (I Corinthians 6:9-11). They had been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus.

If we intend to influence the world with the message of salvation, we must abandon our sectarian establishments—both Catholic and Protestant. To go forth as an “Unholy See” or as a “Protestant Crusade” is to face defeat before we “fire the first shot.”

The religious Establishment couldn’t be any more warped if the Lord had commanded it. The world will not nor cannot be won to Messiah Jesus as long as she is the cause instead of the solution. Nor can the world be conquered for the Captain of our salvation by exerting most of our efforts parroting the party’s clichés or adding more theological waste to our partisan rostrums. The slate must be cleaned, reformed, renewed, and reshaped before receiving our marching orders. Then and only then will we be able and ready to give the battle cry!

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

If apostles Peter and Paul had endeavored to spread the message of the risen Christ while working with and furthering the sects of their

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day, the new movement would have become stalemated and stagnated. If Martin Luther had burdened himself with the ecclesiastical anatomies of his time and had attempted to advance reform while clinging to their bosoms, his towering crusade to rid Catholicism of its corruptions would not have gotten beyond Wittenberg's city gates. His famous words before the *Imperial Diet* at Worms, Germany in April, 1521 are descriptive of his restless, truth-seeking spirit of reformation.

"Unless I am refuted and convinced by testimony of the Scriptures or by clear arguments...my conscience is bound in the Word of God—I cannot and will not recant anything."

Luther escaped the hands of his enemies on this occasion, but the "Unholy See" hounded and hunted him for decades. It was Luther who begged his followers not to call themselves "Lutherans" but simply Christians, saying that he had not been crucified for them. And because his disciples did not heed his advice, the Lutheran sect has become an integral part of the divisive dilemma within the Christian community.

But this is the history of all noble movements that become entangled in partisan, rival affairs. Their affections are no longer centered on the resurrection account but on building up the party. The world drifts farther into a state of darkness while institutional religion organizes, plans, scrutinizes, and develops new ways to increase the size of her sects and enlarge her church coffers.

If we hope to achieve reformation, we must reach *beyond* the established order and ecclesiastical structures. We must bypass religious sculptures, theological systems, clerical institutions, religious symbols and rituals. The activities, movements, and ef-

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forts of the first believers were unskilled, ordinary, unsophisticated, and informal—although serious and edifying. Our contemporary arrangement is perplexing, rehearsed, organized to the brim, ritualistic, formalistic, and boring.

As most everyone is elected to some church office, there's no one left to enhance the practical aspect of the program! So the officers go around in circles, involving themselves in paper work, organizing meetings, filling speaking engagements, and otherwise doing nothing to convert the world. The world keeps hanging, if only by a thread, waiting for "Christians" to toss it the lifejacket of salvation.

But no! Institutional religion is too busy keeping her churches and organizations afloat to bother with the Great Commission. Millions are waiting for someone to bring them the message of salvation, but she sits around creating more organizations to implement the ones that have already become dormant and stale. Until the modern church becomes more interested in more people, she will remain out of the people business. She will eventually self-abort.

HOW MAY SHE BE AWAKENED?

Who can motivate the religious Establishment? She will not be aroused until she discerns the urgency of the times and gets off her butt and out of her organizations and into the world, where Jesus said to go. Her elaborate church palaces stand as monuments to her failures and complacency. Her comfortable pews have weakened her, and her Reverends and Pastors and Priests have wrecked her. She demands to be spoon-fed by professional functionaries, even though she has had ample time to acquire the gift of mutual ministry. Where will it all end? The whole mess will culminate in

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the trash-heap of bygone religions unless the entire system is reformed.

It was *individual* Christian action that brought results 2,000 years ago, and it will take individual Christian action today to achieve the same results. When we, too, begin where the early believers began, we will turn the religious Establishment and her “Pharaohs” upside down, just as the early believers turned the first century Establishment and her Pharisees upside down. We can do likewise by abandoning our comfortable pews, ceasing to demand that professional ecclesiastics spoon-feed us with their warmed-over “sermons,” and “going out into the byways and highways.”

GOING WHERE THE ACTION IS

Instead of trying to get the world into our church palaces, let the Good News of the resurrection take believers out of our church structures and into the world. The “world” is next door, down the street, over the hill, at the supermarket and office, and on the bus and plane. Wherever people are, there we will find the “world.” As it is not necessary to be specially trained and schooled to go next door to tell a neighbor about gardening, it is not required that one be specially instructed and educated to tell the same neighbor about the Man who came forth from the grave after three days.

Those common, uneducated saints who fled from Jerusalem in the face of persecution “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:1-4). They had a simple but stirring story to tell, and they told it! If Jesus’ special envoys, the apostles, had insisted that they first attend a school of theology, the message would have stopped dead in its tracks—as it has in our current age. The early believers were already enrolled in the school of Jesus Christ, and the resurrection was their theology! Everyone was a priest and minis-

ter in the “academy” Jesus and His special envoys founded (1 Peter 2:9). But more about this subject in our next Chapter.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

I will not play the fool by asserting that nothing good or heavenly exists within the institutional church. Although many pockets of good can be found in most churches, overall they’re a divisive mess. A religious, churchy relationship may offer a few temporary merits, but something far greater is needed to finalize our journey to heaven. Only the man Jesus is the answer, the key, and the “lifejacket.” Without Him, all is lost.

The greatest man who ever walked the earth lost His life at the hands of the professional clergy.

“But the chief priests and the elders [clergy] persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed” (Matt. 27:20).

It would be no different if Jesus were to return in the flesh today. Man’s aversion to and hostility toward reformation has not changed. The religious Establishment is the enemy of reformers and the adversary of change. But that does not discourage us from vying for reform.

If a brighter day lies just over the horizon, it will be because reformation made its mark upon the divisive religious scene. For without reformation within the Christian community, Christianity will die on the vine. Death symptoms abound. But with God’s help, we will survive and revive.

Chapter 10

“CHURCHIANITY”

VS.

GOD’S MODEL

We have already provided sufficient evidence to show that Jesus did not found the Roman Catholic Church—or, as I have labeled her, the “Unholy See.” But another question surfaces that needs to be addressed.

Is Jesus the founder of *any* church?

Most of you who read this are probably thinking, “Of course Jesus founded a church! The Bible says so.” *Really?* Are you absolutely certain the oldest Greek manuscripts justify your answer? And if “churchianity” is sectarianism, as I hope to confirm, is Jesus the author?

Our English translations were originally written in the Greek language. One of the most common translations from Greek to English is the old *King James Version* of the 16th century. Millions and millions of devoted readers through the centuries have relied upon this Version to enhance their spiritual visions and to help them in their walk with the Lord. And that’s not all bad. The amazing story of Jesus and how He became our salvation are explicitly and beautifully narrated.

This, however, is not the end of the story. The dialect of *The King James Version* of the scriptures is extinct and its errors numerous. Of course there are errors in every Version of the scriptures, but the KJV seems to contain more than most of the others—unless it would be the Version used by Jehovah’s Witnesses. There seems to be no logical excuses for most of the

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errors found in the KJV. Let me demonstrate.

Most believers say their “church” was founded in about A. D. 30-33, as chronicled in the 2nd chapter of the *Book of Acts*. However, the KJV has one under Moses in Acts 7:38, and another under David in Hebrews 2:12.

“This is he [Moses] that was in the **church** in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina” (Acts 7:38).

“Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the **church** will I sing praise unto thee” (Heb. 2:12, a quote from David in Psalms 22:22).

These two mistranslations were corrected in most subsequent Versions. The point is, Jesus did not introduce a church—*any* church—then or later. This statement will ruffle the feathers of some of you who are churchly-addicted, but at least hear me out.

KING JAMES’ BLUNDERS

“Church” is not a translation of the Greek *ekklesia*. The Greek term is correctly translated congregation, assembly, called-out ones, and may even be rendered “community.” Moses led a congregation of chosen ones under the old era; Jesus leads a congregation of chosen ones under the new era. *But neither led nor is leading a church or religious party.*

Prior to King James’ scholars translating the Greek scriptures into what is known as *The King James Version*, he instructed them:

“**The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word church not to be translated congregation**” (*Lewis’ History of the English Bible*, under “King James’ Instructions to the Translators”).

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The King insisted that all ecclesiastical terms be retained. “Church,” “Easter,” “baptize,” and “Bishop” were a few of his preferences. King James was King and Head of *The Established Church of England*. To permit his translators to deliver the Greek *ekklesia* correctly would have placed him in the position of being King and Head of a mere congregation! Apparently, he wanted no part of that.

It might interest you to know that William Tyndale’s translation of the New Testament scriptures was published in 1525, almost 100 years before *The King James Version* made its appearance. He translated *ekklesia* “congregation” and *baptizo* “immerse” and was condemned to death as a heretic by the “Unholy See.” Additionally, Hugh J. Schonfield’s *Authentic New Testament* (1955) renders Matthew 16:18, “*Upon that rock I will found my community.*” So regardless of how we peel the orange, “church” is a total and absolute mistranslation.

And so is King James’ “Easter” (Acts 12:4). The Greek is *pascha*, which delivers “Passover.” If we reject “Easter” as a correct rendering, why is it so difficult for so many of us to reject King James’ “church”? Partisan religion has been built around “Easter,” just as partisan religion revolves around “church.”

As the knowledgeable student knows, King James substituted “Easter” for “Passover.” If “Easter” expresses what is found in the Greek *pascha*, it would be acceptable to translate it “Easter.” But here is where the bone rubs. “Easter” does *not* express what is found in the Greek *pascha*, and “church” does not express what is found in the Greek *ekklesia*.

“Easter” stemmed from *Eastre*, a pagan goddess, and denotes a

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pagan festival, while the Greek *pascha* refers to the Jewish Passover. The devious Vatican borrowed “Easter” from the pagans, dressed it up with a few eccentric solemnities, and began to celebrate it as a holy day. Protestants then acquired the “holy day” from the Papacy.

The same is true of “church” or “Churchianity.” Like “Easter,” “church” does not have her genesis in heaven, but was acquired from men. Consequently:

*The English term “church,” and what it breeds, denotes a sect, a religious party, a schism, but **never** the one body of believers. As Jesus is not the author of religious parties, neither is He the author of churches, for both are equal to each other.*

DEFINING MY POSITION

Before we launch into this thing further, I think it wise that a few clarifications be made, lest I confuse you.

- Jesus ushered in a community of believers. *“Upon this rock [Peter’s confession that Jesus is God’s Son] I will found my community”* (Matt. 12:18).
- In the scriptures, we find this community or congregation listed under certain synonyms, such as: *household, chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, a new people, spiritual house, new Israel, and one body.*
- Jesus has a people. This cannot be doubted. They are scattered over the hills and valleys of sectarianism. His people are not confined to any *one* sect, religious party, denomination, or “church.”
- The partisan *systems* and their “churches” were not established by the Son of God and His special envoys, the apostles.
- “Church” is not synonymous with any entity recorded in the oldest Greek manuscripts. It is, in fact, *antonymous*.

“Churchianity” vs. God’s Model

Our obsession with “church” has engendered more schism than we’ll ever be able to solve. For when we adopt a foreign label or title that separates us from our fellow Christians, as we have done with “church,” we become a divisive religious league—a party, sect. I like the way *The Living Bible* tenders Galatians 5:20. It identifies the “party spirit” as “the feeling that everyone else is wrong except those in your own little group.” I’m inclined to believe this strikes at the very core of our divisive predicament. The *New English Bible* renders “party intrigues,” and *The Christian Bible* describes the party spirit as “dissensions, sects.” So we need to inquire:

Have we adopted the “church” epithet to separate ourselves from other believers and to identify ourselves as a particular brand of Christians?

To clarify, are we Baptist Christians, Methodist Christians, Church of Christ Christians, Lutheran Christians, Presbyterian Christians, Assembly of God Christians, Catholic Christians, or Church of God Christians?

If “yes” to any of the above, the Spirit justly charges us with possessing the “party spirit,” a work of the flesh, which the apostle Paul condemned (Galatians 5:20). No tossing of the coin will alleviate that fact. And if we are guilty of creating and/or promoting religious parties, how can we then claim that Jesus authored our churches? He founded the one body of believers, not our multicolored schisms. His children are scattered among most sects, for wherever He has a child we have a brother or a sister. But He is not the framer of our denominations, just as He was not the framer of the sects of his day. He strongly opposed the religious parties (sects) of His day, as scripture confirms over and over.

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There are, of course, other earmarks of a sect or religious party besides its name, label, or title. When a group of professed believers sets up a doctrinal platform, whether based on truth or fallacy, and rejects other believers who cannot accept it, that group becomes a religious party or sect. The “Christ party” at Corinth was just as wrong as the “Paul party,” the “Apollos party,” and the “Cephas party” (I Cor. 1:12-13). *It was wrong because it rejected other believers.*

PLAYING AROUND WITH “CHURCH”

We have played around with “church” far too long. We have taken a mistranslated word and erected sectarian walls around it. Those walls have formed the Baptist Church, Methodist Church, Lutheran Church, Presbyterian Church, Catholic Church, Church of God Church, Christian Church, Church of Christ Church (*a cappella*), Assembly of God Church, Evangelical Free Church, Pentecostal Church, and a host of others.

Here is where the fundamental and inexcusable sin has been committed. We have built our own brand of wall around “church” and excluded far too many sincere believers who do not “belly up” to our brand of religion. We call that wall “The Lord’s church” and dare anyone to breach it.

Yes, unquestionably, there is only one body of believers, as per Ephesians 4:4. But we have misused and misapplied that divine passage by applying it to the wall we have erected in the form of “church.” It is shameful and disgraceful. If Ephesians 4:4 (“There is one body” of believers) can be desecrated by creating *many* bodies, it may also be violated by concocting many Gods, Spirits, hopes, Lords, and faiths. The obvious truth is that we have sinned by dividing that one body of believers into a profusion of sects and

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factions. We ought to get down upon our knees and petition the Lord to forgive us.

Even “congregation,” “community,” and “assembly”—correct renderings of the Greek *ekkesia*—are not immune from ecclesiastical abuse. And if our English “church” had never surfaced and exploded into a major problem, the sectarian mindset and its offspring would have devised another foreign icon to use as their sacred cow. Like the children of old Israel, we never learn.

When God came down and disrupted the language of the people at the building of the Tower of Babel, they groped about in the darkness of confused tongues. Today’s clerics, popes, “Reverends,” and other churchy elitists have constructed another “Tower of Babel” in the configuration of churches and religious jargon. Considering our divisive plight and language barrier, it is no surprise that so many are groping about in spiritual darkness.

The one body of believers, which was once pure and tranquil when originally founded by Jesus and His ambassadors, has evolved into an apostate system of religion. Unless she undergoes complete reform, she will eventually self-destruct. Although she once shined as a bright light, she is now only a flicker.

If reformation ever reaches its zenith within her borders, it will be because we rediscovered and recaptured the vocabulary of the Holy Spirit. For when we build sectarian walls around a bogus term like “church,” allege that our Lord erected those walls, and deny entrance to other believers who do not carry our label and mouth our brand, we become puppets of the apostate church. And that is what this message is all about. Jesus prayed that His children would be united. Instead, we have chosen the opposite.

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“Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be united, even as we are united” (John 17:11).

IS THERE A SOLUTION?

Yes, dismantle and dismiss all of our factional creations and march under the banner of Jesus the Messiah. If our flag bears anything other than the blood of our Lord, it is an apostate flag. The only flag I will ever fly again, and the only label I will ever wear again, will bear the name of my Savior and Redeemer. All other flags and labels are bogus. For me to wave any other flag would compromise my relationship with my Lord and jeopardize my allegiance to Him. I will have no part of it.

Like all divisive entities, the institutional church contains many beautiful people whose only wish is to follow their King and Shepherd in all areas of the Christian walk. I do not entreat them to leave the ones they love and start a “loyal church”—whatever that is. *I entreat them to bid farewell to the sectarian party spirit and launch a ministry of reformation within the confines of their own church environment.*

The sectarian spirit is a separatist mindset that generates division. Believers turned reformers may choose to remain where they are and work for change. Many believers who are entangled in partisan religion would happily abandon the party spirit in favor of reformation and freedom if someone were available to lead and teach them. May God send reformers to reap the harvest.

It is not always easy to work for reform within our contemporary sects. Martin Luther wanted to work within the Roman Catholic Church for reform, but the scandalous Vatican would have no part of it. Instead, they sought his life. He escaped

the “Unholy See’s” murderous hounds, but the sinister Vatican continued their efforts to find him and “do him in.”

WHY DID JESUS DIE?

We may rest our oars that Jesus did not die for religious parties, churches, denominations, or cults. Instead, He died for Jews, He died for Gentiles, He died “for all the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one” (John 11:52). Jesus is not interested in uniting churches, denominations, and cults. He’s interested in uniting all of God’s scattered children, wherever they are, to bring them together into one body of believers “so that they may be united as we [Son and Father] are united” (John 17:11).

But another question to challenge our thinking: *To which of today’s denominations is Jesus aligned?* Is He a Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Mormon, Jehovah’s Witness, Muslim, or Hindu? Is He affiliated with the Church of God, associated with the Evangelical Free Church, lined up with the Seventh Day Adventists, allied with the Assembly of God, a member of the *a cappella* Church of Christ, united with the Christian Church, or linked to the Roman Catholic Church? Which? And I answer: *None of them!*

All of the above are religious parties (sects), and Jesus is not a party man. He has children in most of the churches mentioned above, but He does not recognize the *parties* as such. And He does not endorse or condone their existence. In His own time on earth, He recognized that His Father had children scattered among all of the Jewish sects, but he confronted and opposed the sectarian *Establishments* and their leaders. If He were on earth today in the flesh, I’m confident He would view our present-day religious institutions as He viewed those of His time. He worked among

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partisan systems for reform, while not joining any of them. And so it should be with us—work within and among partisan groups, whenever possible, without subscribing to any of them.

Occasionally, I receive letters from recipients of my weekly *Reformation Rumbblings* column who share their struggles at reform within the confines of their own church. The experiences vary. Some are called on the carpet and shipped out. Others are confronted head-on by the elite pulpit hireling. Still others are asked to attend the next “Business Meeting” to “go over a few things.” But the best of letters are those that speak of leaders who are willing to listen and evaluate. They are few and far between, however.

I do not discourage these courageous believers for trying to work for reform within the *system*. I strongly encourage them, in fact. For nine years, in Phoenix, I worked at reform within the *system*. I would do it again if the opportunity presented itself. I have always believed that a degree of reform can be achieved by working *within* the institutional church. But it’s a hard sale, a difficult ministry, because most “would rather fight than switch.”

In West Virginia in the early 60s, *prior* to my defecting the religious Establishment, I was called on the carpet by the church’s chieftains and fired on the spot because I attended a speaking engagement of a fellow my “church” did not favor. Partisan religion corrupts the spirit—just as power corrupts.

Church addiction is like drug addiction. It is hard to “throw in the towel.” Drugs affect one biologically. “Churchitis” affects one psychologically and spiritually. But both are destructive addic-

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tions. Drugs destroy the body and mind. “Churchitis” does havoc with one’s freedom and obstructs his/her God-given gift to dissent.

LET’S UNDERSCORE

If Jesus ascended to heaven without being a Roman Catholic, and He did, and if the apostle Paul was taken to paradise without being a Presbyterian, and he was, I, too, can enter paradise without being a Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, Mormon, Roman Catholic, Muslim, Jehovah’s Witness, or without being tainted with any of the other partisan colors. I think I’ll just be a “believer at large”—a Christian only. Surely that will be sufficient. God’s grace will fill in the gaps, if any need to be filled.

ENDNOTES: If, as I affirm, church edifices have become our idols, and if church structures were not prevalent during the formative decades of the Christian community, where did the early believers meet?

“Greet also the congregation in their house” (Rom. 16:5). *“Aquila and Prisca, together with the congregation in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord”* (I Cor. 16:19). *“Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the congregation in her house”* (Col. 4:15). *“To Philemon our beloved fellow worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the congregation in your house”* (Phil. 1-2).

Our next Chapter will cover this subject in more detail. We will also address the way their meetings were arranged. But here’s a clip from today’s scene: *“Just come on in, you peasants, warm your pew and pay your due!”*

Have you ever wondered why the kingly clergy walk around in their “Halloween” garb? Jesus confronted this problem in His day. *“Beware of the scribes [clergy] who like to walk around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the places of honor at feasts”* (Luke 20:46). Jesus always gives the best answer, doesn’t He?

Chapter 11

THE EARLY ASSEMBLIES

Where did they meet? Did they build Edifices?

“There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered” (Acts 20:8).

The house was filled where the early believers had met. Happiness and joy lit up each face, even those who had suffered during the week because of the faith they had adopted and the cause to which they were married. Embraces were common and holy kisses were exchanged.

One of the older men (“elder”) called the meeting to order by announcing that brother Jason had words of encouragement to share with the collective body and that he should be heeded. Jason was seated on the floor near the east corner of the large upper room. He stood up and told the congregation how God had used him to convince several of the townspeople that the resurrected Jesus was truly God’s Son and the believer’s Messiah. Everyone expressed joy.

When Jason had completed his remarks, Matthew motioned to the leaders of the assembly from within the semi-circle that he had something to say. Following his comments an exchange of messages, statements, and questions ensued. Occasionally, one of the overseers (shepherds) interrupted to maintain order or to clarify a point.

Voices of concern, love, and compassion were heard. No one was denied the freedom to share words of comfort and exhortation with the assembled group. For when they came together, the goal

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was to learn from each other and be strengthened (1 Cor. 14:26-31).

FREEDOM FOR ALL

Mutual participation was encouraged. No one within the assembled group was restricted and no one was asked to sit down. The meeting was family-like. There was no platform to mount or pulpit to lean on. Informality filled the air. All things were open and mutual. “Amen” and “Praise the Lord” were heard often as everyone, without show or display, demonstrated his interest and elation.

One brother sang a psalm to the enjoyment of all. Two others offered special prayers for their imprisoned brothers and afflicted sisters. All of the pastors (shepherds, elders) read portions of the Old Covenant scriptures and offered brief explanations and exhortations. They did not appear to be of the ecclesiastical mold, theological legislators, or professional functionaries.

NUCLEUS OF THE MEETING

The Lord’s Supper was the cardinal exercise of the meeting, and it was merged with a “love feast” or common meal. As part of the “love feast,” everyone shared a large loaf and drank fruit of the vine in memory of what their Messiah had sacrificed on their behalf. An expression of serious celebration was seen on each face. No one looked as though he was at a funeral. They were exhilarated because the man Jesus had died for them!

As there was no edifice to make a payment on and no cleric to support, there was no immediate monetary need. Therefore no collection was taken. However, one of the shepherds (pastors) announced, “We have just received word that Paul and John will be passing through within a week to ten days to collect money for

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Jerusalem's destitute saints. We admonish each one of you to lay something aside at home so that no collection will have to be made when they arrive."

HOW FAR ADRIFT ARE WE?

If I have read the New Covenant scriptures correctly, I believe this is a fairly accurate description of the communal meetings of the early believers. If a comparison were to be made between their meetings and ours, hardly anything in common would be found. Note the following observations:

- Theirs were informal but serious.
- *Ours are ritualistic and formalistic.*

- Theirs were periods of celebration and joy.
- *Ours are somber and restrained.*

- Their activities were shared jointly.
- *Ours are cleric-centered, for everything revolves around him.*

- Theirs were incessant worship.
- *Ours consist of specific "acts of worship" and no more.*

- Words of love and compassion, spoken prior to their meetings, were worship.
- *The same words spoken prior to our "services" are not worship, for worship doesn't begin until the hands on the clock are at a certain crossroads.*

- Their meetings were alive and active.
- *Ours are "services," as at a funeral.*

- Their meetings were without the professional ecclesiastic.
- *Ours would "die on the vine" without him.*

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As we can see, there's hardly a resemblance between the early assemblies and ours.

WHO BREAKS THE “BREAD OF LIFE”?

A Church Bulletin from Colorado tells it all. The pulpit cleric announces his resignation and expresses his appreciation that God has granted him the grand opportunity of “ministering to the saints.” He has been with them five and one-half years and feels it is time to move on to other “evangelistic fields.” In his concluding remarks, he states, “We pray you will find a suitable man to break the bread of life unto you.”

The picture is clear. The “bread of life”—warmed-over “sermons”—cannot be broken without the employment of a professional Minister or, in Catholic terms, a professional Priest. The pew-sitters would suffer from spiritual malnutrition without him. He's *the* minister, *the* priest, *the* preacher, *the* pastor, and *the* orator.

Shades of hallelujah, how far we have drifted! We now demand to be spoon-fed by a specialized feeder. We have not matured to the point of feeding ourselves. So we all gather at the church corral on Sunday mornings to warm pews while an imported hireling prepares our spiritual food and spoon-feeds us. Is it any wonder we haven't matured in the faith? I'll let you in on a little secret.

Nowhere in the New Covenant scriptures do we find an example of any man being imported by a congregation of believers to function as the minister, the pastor, the priest, or the preacher. And that is because the early believers ministered to and edified one another. They didn't find it necessary to import an elite ecclesiastic to do their ministering for them. They exported men to evangelize, and supported them financially, but no one was ever imported to do what all believers should be doing—minis-

tering to one another. In our contemporary scene, we hire and pay big bucks to a specialist to function as a *proxy*, the exact opposite of what the early believers practiced.

SPELLING IT OUT

Any principle or practice we introduce in our assemblies that either denies or interferes with the reciprocity of all believers, such as our “one another” exchanges or joint participation, as the scriptures define it, is a grave innovation.

We ought to be reminded that if a congregation can import a religious “celebrity” and pay him a big salary to do all or most of the public speaking, the same congregation can import another man and pay him a healthy salary to do all of the singing, and still another to do all of the praying. Well, you get the idea. The principle that allows one allows the others.

To state it more explicitly, if importing specialists to feed the flock is heaven’s way, all of our gifts can be performed by *proxy*. As a result, all we need do is warm a pew and wait till heaven arrives. For, after all, we’re paying others to do our ministries.

The universal biblical principle, found throughout, is that in the assembly of the saints, all gifts are to be shared mutually. The “hired hand” interferes with and disrupts this principle. Do you suppose Paul had the professional minister or priest in mind when he told the Roman believers they were “able to instruct one another” (Rom. 15:14)? Surely he was not referring to a one-man instructor! And was Paul coming off the wall with a lot of nonsense when he told the believers at Colosse they were to “teach and admonish one another” (Col. 3:16)? The one-man admonisher was nowhere to be found. We have invented and devised a bogus

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function within the body of believers.

THE RULE IN EACH MEETING

In the early assemblies, there was a mutual exchange of praises, teaching, sharing, and singing. No one person did it all. The Thessalonians were told to “encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thess. 5:11). When we substitute this “one another” arrangement with a counterfeit “strategy” like the bigwig Protestant Pastor or the “Fatherly” Catholic Priest, we are guilty of disrupting heaven’s blueprint for spiritual growth. There’s no way to avoid this conclusion.

Take a look at our “house churches.” Where’s the professional cleric? He’s not needed! Why? Because all attendees contribute their share as God’s grace abounds within them, and as He confers a diversity of gifts among them. Now tell me: *Why in heaven’s name are we incapable of conducting our “church services” in the same fashion?* The reason is because we have gone professional. We have abandoned common ground in favor of skilled specialists. We want the world to know how sophisticated and refined we are. So we go all out to import the best and build the fanciest edifices. We have adopted idolatry, just as surely as we have substituted a bogus system.

THE END IS BEGINNING TO SHOW

When will it all end? It will end in the trash heap of by-gone religions unless we wise up and address our deficiencies and get back to the basics of edifying and strengthening *one another*. The situation will not improve until and unless we rediscover the *one another* arrangement, as is so clearly defined in scripture.

ENDNOTE: Historians say the first church structure was built in Alexandria, Egypt in about 200 A. D. This “novelty” became Christianity’s deathbed.

Chapter 12

“I KNOW YOU BY NAME”

[Salve to Soothe the Wounds]

“I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name” (Exodus 33:17).

It was at this junction that Moses requested that God show him His personal glory. I understand this appeal to mean that Moses wanted to see God’s personal presence. The Lord told Moses, *“I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you...but you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live” (19-20).* Then God said to Moses:

“There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen” (21-23).

What an experience that must have been—to be able to see God’s backside! Surely it must have thrilled Moses’ spirit. Talk about an encounter! Movie producers could never come close to capturing on film that prodigious spectacle. *“Close Encounters Of The Third Kind”* doesn’t even touch the helm of the garment.

I feel a little disappointed that few details about this glorious event are recorded. For some unknown reason, heaven failed to chronicle Moses’ reactions. We might conjecture that his reactions were something like the following:

“Then God placed Moses in the cleft of the rock and covered

“I know you by Name”

him with His hand until His glory passed by. God then removed His hand and Moses looked upon God’s backside. He was awe-struck and submerged in fear. At this, Moses fell prostrate upon the ground and hid his face, because he was afraid to look upon God any longer.”

I have often wondered why we cannot look upon God’s face and live. Is it because God’s glory is so awe-inspiring, so superb, so incredible and unimaginable, so amazing and so colossal that mere human flesh cannot gaze upon such splendor and survive? Perhaps.

Only when God transformed Himself into human flesh in the personage of His Son did man look upon Him. It seems that Abraham might have talked with the Lord when He appeared to him as Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18).

The apostle John says, *“No one has ever seen God”* (2 John 4:12). Apparently, John is talking about a face-to-face encounter. In his Gospel, John quotes Jesus as saying, *“No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only He has seen the Father”* (John 6:45). Jesus seems to be alluding to a face-to-face experience.

When our lowly bodies are transformed to be like Jesus’ glorious body (Phil. 3:21), will we be able to see God face-to-face? I believe we will. But even if we are not permitted to gaze upon His face, I’m confident His glory will be utterly delightful. Moses got a glimpse of God’s glory. What a foretaste of divinity!

But *why* Moses? Why would God choose to show part of His glory to a man who tried to refuse the calling for which he was chosen? The answer seems to surface in God’s announcement, *“I*

“I know you by Name”

know you by name.” God had established a special relationship with His servant Moses. Actually, God knew Moses by name long before He was born. Mere acquaintance is not what is meant, but rather an exceptional union between two persons—one human, the other divine.

Throughout scripture, it is common to find God the Father and God the Son establishing unique relationships with certain people. Jesus had an exceptional relationship with Peter, James, and John. John often referred to himself as the “disciple whom Jesus loved.” Our Lord loved all of His followers, but He felt a *special* closeness to John. And so, before dying on a Roman tree, Jesus assigned John as care-taker of His earthly mother. To put it another way, *Jesus knew John by name.*

And this brings me to a question or two. What is our status with God? Is the relationship close or distant? Does God know us by name? Perhaps He does not know us as intimately as He knew Moses, but He knows us by name in that He has chosen us to lead His fallen creation out of the bondage of sin and into His marvelous light. *What a privilege!* “Rejoice and be glad.”



ENDNOTES: *Mad Church Disease* and *The Apostate Church vs. The Authentic Church* are two other books authored by this scribe. If interested in either, contact me at Renewal@mindspring.com for the price.

My weekly column, *Reformation Rumbblings*, may be subscribed to without cost. And my Web Site under www.mindspring.com/~renewal contains data on numerous topics—religious, spiritual, secular, social, and political.

FROM THE SIDELINES

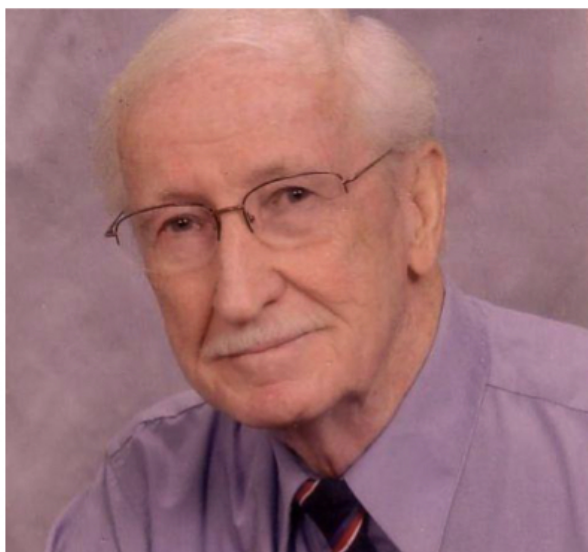
[How this book came about]

Let me introduce you to *Joseph P. Bellinger*, Author, Lecturer, and a zealous Defender of and an Apologist for the Roman Catholic Church. [For further details, go to *Google* and type in his name.] Joseph is a prolific writer and researcher. His writings and lectures often revolve around the Jewish Holocaust controversy.

Shortly after his being exposed to some of my observations about Roman Catholicism, I received a challenge for a written dialogue. I accepted the challenge, but *only* on the condition that our discussion is published and that he pays the entire cost—or find a publisher. He agreed, but then introduced a few unacceptable guidelines. One was that our *external* sources—“Church Fathers”—not extend beyond the 4th century. This would have restricted me, but given him an advantage, so I rejected it.

I sent him my first manuscript and, after a few days, his first manuscript arrived. Next he disapproved of the way I documented my sources, and even disapproved of some of my references and citations. This issue was never resolved, so I suggested we not use *external* sources but rely on the scriptures only. He agreed again.

I then compiled my *revised* manuscript and sent it to him, based *only* on biblical sources and evidence. That was months ago. He sent me an occasional note relative to our discussion, but his refutation never did arrive. Finally, I concluded I would never know how he would have responded. At that point, I sent him a note and told him I would write my own book by using the material I had already prepared for our discussion. A big part of this book embodies that material.—*Buff Scott, Jr.* <End>



Buff Scott, Jr.

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may be subscribed to without cost.