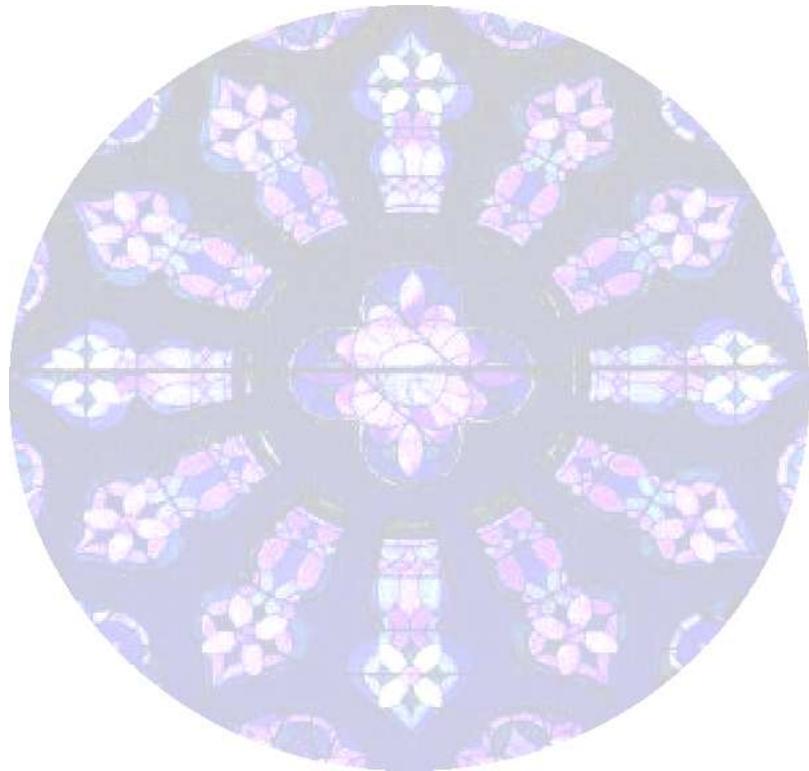


Explaining Your Faith to Catholic Friends



Mark D. Dattoli

Assumptions

- “Catholic bashing” is never appropriate
 - A respectful and fair analysis of differences leads to joint understanding
 - Facts, not attacks, promote insights & breakthrough thinking
 - Not all Catholics hold to the official “party-line”
 - There are “wheat & tares” in all churches
- Despite the best of intentions, I may be wrong on some points
 - Feedback, corrections, & dialog are welcomed
- With the web, electronic Bibles, & super-bookstores, you can dig deeper

US Religious Survey

Definitions

- A survey respondent is classified as “born-again” if they:
 - have made a commitment to Jesus
 - have confessed their sin, and
 - have accepted Jesus
- A survey respondent is classified as “evangelical” if they:
 - are born-again, and also:
 - have a proper concept of God
 - believe in the veracity of Scripture, and
 - feel a personal responsibility to share their faith

Born Again Christians

- About 36% of all adults classify as born-again
- Of all Protestants: 55%
- Of all Catholics: 18%

Evangelicals

- About 11% of all adults classify as evangelical
- Of all Catholics: less than 1/2 of 1%

Being Good Enough

- Agreeing strongly or somewhat with this statement:
If a person is generally good or does enough good things during their life, they will earn a place in heaven
 - Of all adults: 57%
 - Of all born-again Christians: 41%
 - Of all evangelicals: 0%
 - Of all Catholics: 84%

George Barna, Absolute Confusion

Contact Mark

- For more information
- To discuss the materials or engage in dialog
- To schedule this course at your church

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1. Catholic Distinctives

Reference Materials

Catholic Texts

- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Catholicism (O'Gorman & Faulkner)
- Why I Am a Catholic (Wills)
- Rome Sweet Home (Hahn)

Catholic Web Sites

- The Catechism online: christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/ccc_cont.html
 - Catechism search engine: christusrex.org/www2/kerygma/ccc/searchcat.html
- Catholic Encyclopedia: newadvent.org/cathen
- The "Top 50 Catholic websites" List: newadvent.org
- The Vatican web site: vatican.va

Media (Chicago)

- WSCN Radio, AM 820
- EWTN TV, channel 62 or 16 (see also ewtn.com)

Catholic Populations

- 1 Billion in the World; 60 Million in the USA (about 25%); In Illinois, about 33%

Church Structure

Offices

- 1 Pope
- 150-200 Cardinals
- 4700 Bishops
- 400,000 Priests

The Catechism on the Pope

- For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church, has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church
- Supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful
- (His) infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself
- Elected by Cardinals in conclave
- Successor of Peter (882-891, paragraph numbers of the Catholic Catechism)

The Catechism on the Magisterium (the teaching body of the Church)

- The pastoral duty of the Magisterium is aimed at seeing to it that the People of God abide in the truth
- To fulfill this service, Christ endowed the Church's shepherds with the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals
- Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others
- Working together...they all contribute...effectively to the salvation of souls (890, 95)

The Catechism on Authority

- Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as is it put down in writing...And (Holy) Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles"
- The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living, teaching office of the Church alone
- This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome (81-85)

Categories of Modern Roman Catholicism

- Nominal or Social Catholicism
- Traditional or orthodox Catholicism
- Modernist, liberal Catholicism
- Lapsed or Apostate Catholicism
- "Evangelical" Catholicism
- Monastic Catholicism
- Latin Mass/Tridentine Catholicism
- Syncretistic/eclectic Catholicism
- "Moderate" Catholicism
- Ethnic or cultural Catholicism
- Charismatic Catholicism
- Evangelical "Catholicism"
- Mystical Catholicism

▪ Additionally, there has always been tension about who is ultimately in charge—the Pope or the church councils

The Sacraments

The 7 Sacraments

- Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation, Marriage, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick

The Catechism on the Sacraments

- The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation
- "Sacramental grace" is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament (1129)

The Catechism on Baptism

- The baptized have "put on Christ" Baptism is a bath that purifies, justifies, and sanctifies
- The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation...for those to whom the gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament
- The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude
- Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible mark of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation (1228, 1257, 1272)

The Catechism on Confirmation

- Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation"
- Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace
- Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace
 - it unites us more fully to Christ
 - it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
 - it renders our bond with the Church more perfect

- it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit
- The faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time (1285, 1303, 1306)

The Catechism on the Eucharist

- At the Last Supper...our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages. The Eucharist is the “source & summit of the Christian life.” The other sacraments are...bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented to it.
- The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice. “The victim is one and the same...the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner...is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner. (1323-4, 1367)
- It is by conversion of the bread and wine into Christ’s body that Christ becomes present in the sacrament
- This change the holy Catholic Church has...called transubstantiation
- Worship of the Eucharist. We express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord
- To receive communion is to receive Christ (1375-8, 1382)
- The fruits of Holy Communion
 - augments our union with Christ
 - separates us from sin
 - wipes away venial sin
 - preserves us from future mortal sins
 - unites us more closely to Christ & the Church
 - commits us to the poor
- The Eucharist & unity of Christians
 - Ecclesial communities derived from the Reformation...have not preserved the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Holy Orders
 - Inter-communion with these communities is not possible (1391-1400)

Understanding Catholicism on Reconciliation

- The person going to confession does the following:
 - Tells sins to the priest
 - Expresses true sorrow
 - Makes a firm commitment to change
 - Prays the act of contrition
 - Performs the penance given
- In turn, the priest:
 - Extends the forgiveness of Christ through the Church
 - Determines the reparation or penance (p.151)
- For Heaven’s Sake! Remember you won’t be forgiven if you aren’t really sorry, if you don’t do your penance, and if you don’t have an honest intention to make a really big effort not to do it again! (p.153)

The Catechism on Reconciliation

- Sins are rightly evaluated according to their gravity. The distinction between mortal and venial sin, already evident in Scripture (1 John 5:16-17) became part of the tradition of the Church. It is corroborated by human experience.

- For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: a grave matter, committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent
- Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart &...necessitates a new initiative of God's mercy and a conversion of heart which is normally accomplished within the setting of the sacrament of reconciliation (1854-7)
- Through the sacraments of initiation, man receives new life in Christ...This new life as a child of God can be weakened and even lost by sin
- The sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation is also known as Confession, Conversion, or Forgiveness
- By the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent pardon and peace (1420-4)
- Many Forms of Penance in Christian Life
 - The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on 3 forms: fasting, prayer and almsgiving
 - Alongside the radical purification brought about by Baptism or martyrdom, they cite as means of obtaining forgiveness of sins: efforts at reconciliation with one's neighbor, tears of repentance, concern for the salvation of one's neighbor, the intercession of the saints, and the practice of charity "which covers a multitude of sins"
- Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church (1434, 1458)
- Satisfaction
 - Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. The sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must "make satisfaction for" or "expiate" his sins. This is called "penance."
- Penance...can consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy, service of neighbor, voluntary self-denial, sacrifices, and above all the patient acceptance of the cross we must bear (1459-60)
- Indulgences
 - Indulgences are closely linked to the effects of the sacrament of Penance
 - An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven
 - An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part of all of the temporal punishment
 - Indulgences may be applied to the living or dead
- Through indulgences
 - the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory (1471, 1498)
- Indulgences & the Punishments of Sin
 - Sin has a double consequence. Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life
 - On the other hand every sin, even venial...must be purified whether here on earth or after death in the state called Purgatory
 - The forgiveness of sin and restoration of communion with God entail the remission of eternal punishment for sin, but temporal punishment remains...the Christian must strive to accept this temporal punishment of sin as a grace (1472-3)

Indulgences: A Recent Example

- Bull of Indiction: Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 (Papal bull issued 11/29/98) See the text of the original Bull on the Vatican web site

Conditions for Gaining the Jubilee Indulgence

- A plenary (full) indulgence can be gained only once a day
- Participation in the Eucharist, which is required for all indulgences, should properly take place on the same day as the prescribed works are performed, (works such as...)
 - In Rome, make a pious pilgrimage to one of the Patriarchal Basilicas
 - In other ecclesiastical territories, make a sacred pilgrimage to the Cathedral Church or to other places designated by the Ordinary, and there assist devoutly at a liturgical celebration or other pious exercise. Spend some time in pious meditation, ending with the "Our Father", the profession of faith in any approved form, and prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary.
 - Visit the sick...throughout the Holy Year; On each occasion gain the plenary indulgence, although obviously not more than once a day
 - The plenary indulgence of the Jubilee can also be gained through actions which express in a practical and generous way the penitential spirit which is, as it were, the heart of the Jubilee; This would include abstaining for at least one whole day from unnecessary consumption (e.g., from smoking or alcohol, or fasting or practicing abstinence)
 - Supporting by a significant contribution works of a religious or social nature

One final note on Indulgences

- From the Catholic New American Bible
 - A partial indulgence is granted to the faithful who use Sacred Scripture for spiritual reading with the veneration due the word of God. A plenary indulgence is granted if the reading continue for at least one half hour (Imprimatur page)

The Catechism on Reconciliation

- In the Communion of Saints
 - The Christian who seeks to purify himself of his sin and become holy with the help of God's grace is not alone
 - A perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth
 - Between them there is an abundant exchange of all good things. In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others
 - Thus the recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified
 - We call these spiritual goods the Church's treasury...This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God.
 - In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the saints, all those who...have made their lives holy...In this way they attained their own salvation and at the same time cooperated in saving their brothers (1474-7)

The Sacramentals

Stations of the cross	Anointing with holy oil
Crucifixes	Holy water
Scapulars	Ashes on the forehead
Miraculous medals	Ringing bells
Genuflecting	Observing holy days
Lighting candles	Blessed palms
Statues	Blessed throats
Pictures of the Saints	Blessing of a new car
The sign of the cross	Blessing of salt
Exorcisms	Blessing of pets

- Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer, they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it (1670)

Catholic Regulations

The 10 Commandments

- The 2nd Commandment (graven image) is relinquished
 - The rationale is that now that Christ has appeared, we now know what God looks like; So there is a "new economy" of images
- The 10th Commandment is broken in 2 parts
 - In the Catholic catechetical tradition, the 9th Commandment forbids carnal concupiscence (coveting another's wife); the 10th forbids coveting another's goods (2514)

The 6 Precepts

- Attend Mass on Sunday & on Holy Days of Obligation
- Observe fast days
- Confess grave sins at least once a year
- Receive communion at least once a year, preferably during the Easter season
- Observe the Church's laws on marriage
- Contribute to the Church

Church Documents

- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- Code of Canon Law (1,972 laws on church life, e.g. priests must be celibate males)
- Conciliar documents (e.g. Trent, Vatican I & II)
- Papal decrees (various topics, e.g. birth control)

Catholic Prayer

The Catechism on Prayer

- Prayer cannot be reduced to the spontaneous outpouring of interior impulse
- Nor is it enough to know what the Scriptures reveal about prayer: one must also learn how to pray
- Through a living transmission (Sacred Tradition) within the believing and praying Church, the Holy Spirit teaches the children of God how to pray (2650)

Pope John Paul II on the Rosary

- I therefore proclaim the year from October 2002 to October 2003 the Year of the Rosary
- The Church has seen fit to grant indulgences to those who recite it with the required dispositions
- If prayed in this way the Rosary truly becomes a spiritual itinerary in which Mary acts as Mother, Teacher and Guide
- I entrust this Apostolic Letter to the loving hands of the Virgin Mary, prostrating myself in spirit before her image in the splendid Shrine built for her by Blessed Bartolo Longo, the apostle of the Rosary. I willingly make my own the touching words with which he concluded his well-known Supplication to the Queen of the Holy Rosary:
 - O Blessed Rosary of Mary, sweet chain which unites us to God, bond of love which unites us to the angels, tower of salvation against the assaults of Hell, safe port in our universal shipwreck, we will never abandon you. You will be our comfort in the hour of death: yours our final kiss as life ebbs away. And the last word from our lips will be your sweet name, O Queen of the Rosary of Pompei, O dearest Mother, O Refuge of Sinners, O Sovereign Consoler of the Afflicted. May you be everywhere blessed, today and always, on earth and in heaven.

The Rosary

- 1 Apostles' Creed
- 6 Lord's Prayers
- 53 Hail Mary prayers
- 5 Glory Be prayers
- 1 Hail! Holy Queen prayers

- A complete prayer has 20 decades instead of just the more common 5 shown

Hail Mary

- Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Hail! Holy Queen

- Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy! Our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb Jesus; O clement, O loving, O sweet virgin Mary. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

Mary: Her Titles, Roles & Activities

Mary: Her Titles & Roles

- The Blessed Virgin; Mother of God; Queen of Heaven; Mediator & Advocate

The Pope on Mary

- Mary is also Mother of Mercy because it is to her that Jesus entrusts his Church and all humanity

Other Doctrines

- Immaculate Conception; Perpetual Virgin; Assumption of Mary
- Co-Redeemer (officially this title was rejected, despite “the Pope receiving more than six million signatures asking him to give the Virgin Mary this ultimate promotion”)
- Officially:
 - **Veneration** is given to created beings:
 - Honor, reverence & devotion is given to the saints and angels (“Dulia”)
 - Special veneration (“extended praise” in the Catholic Encyclopedia) is given to Mary (“Hyperdulia”)
 - **Adoration** or homage is reserved for God alone (“Latria”)
 - Thomas Aquinas’ view: the devotion a person has to God’s saints does not end with the saints themselves, but rather reaches ultimately to God through the saints

Appearances of Mary (Apparitions)

- Lourdes: Healing waters; Our Lady of Guadalupe; Fatima: World Peace; Others

The Saints

- Saints are people who have lived exemplary lives & have been declared saints by the Church
- Some saints are designated for special needs & professions
 - St. Jude: Patron Saint of Lost Causes
 - St. Christopher: Traveling
 - St. Peregrine Laziosi: Cancer
- From “Understanding Catholicism”
 - To approach (God) can sometimes feel intimidating. Saints...are in heaven and have the power to help us. It never hurts to have friends in high places, and it is often smart to have someone speak on your behalf. Saints offer intercession (p.10)

Steps to sainthood

- The official canonization procedure
 - The process must begin five years after the candidates’ death (Pope John Paul II waived this for Mother Teresa)
 - Local bishops investigate the life of the candidate; findings are sent to the Vatican
 - After approval by a panel of theologians and cardinals, the pope proclaims the candidate is “venerable,” meaning a role model of Roman Catholic virtues
 - The next step is beatification if it is determined that the candidate is responsible for a miracle after his death
 - Finally, for the designation of saint, the church must certify proof of a second posthumous miracle

Catholic Dogma

Dogma are doctrines requiring “assent by the faithful”;

Dogma has grown over the years:

- 2nd cent. Presbyters (or elders) were first called priests
- 300 Prayers for the dead
- 375 The veneration of angels & dead saints; use of images
- 394 The Mass as a daily celebration
- 416 Infant baptism by sprinkling becomes compulsory
- 431 Proclamation that infant baptism regenerates the soul
- 431 The beginning of the exaltation of Mary; first use of the term “Mother of God”
- 451 The worship of Mary instituted
- 500 The Mass instituted as re-sacrifice of Jesus for the remission of sin
- 500 Priests dress differently from the laity
- 526 Extreme unction (last rites, or anointing of the sick)
- 593 The doctrine of purgatory
- 600 Prayers offered to Mary, dead saints, & angels
- 607 The bishop of Rome adopts the name Pope; done only after the fall of the Roman Empire
- 709 Kissing the Pope’s foot
- 788 Veneration of the cross, images, & relics
- 850 Holy water blessed by a priest
- 927 College of Cardinals begun
- 995 Canonization of dead people as saints
- 998 Fasting on Fridays & before Lent
- 1000 Attendance at Mass made mandatory under penalty of mortal sin
- 1056 RC and Greek Orthodox churches split over papal authority, different modes of baptism, & the veneration of saints & images
- 1079 Celibacy of priesthood
- 1090 The rosary (beads copied from Hindus & Muslims)
- 12th cent. The 7 sacraments defined
- 1184 The Inquisition of “heretics”
- 1190 Sale of indulgences to reduce time in purgatory
- 1215 Transubstantiation
- 1215 Confession of sins to the priest at least once a year
- 1220 The adoration of the wafer (host)
- 1229 Bible placed on Index of Forbidden Books
- 1251 The scapular invented
- 1414 Cup forbidden to laymen
- 1438 Purgatory elevated from doctrine to dogma
- 1439 Dogma of sacraments affirmed
- 1545 Apocryphal books were added to the Bible
- 1546 Tradition declared equal authority with the Bible
- 1854 The Immaculate Conception of Mary
- 1864 Pope condemns all scientific discoveries not approved by the RCC

- 1870 Infallibility of the pope in matters of faith & morals
- 1922 Virgin Mary proclaimed co-redeemer with Jesus
- 1930 Pius XI condemns the public schools
- 1931 Mary as “The Mother of God” reaffirmed
- 1950 Assumption of Mary into heaven
- 1965 Mary proclaimed the Mother of the Church
- 1985 Pope John Paul II declares God will not forgive sins directly; forgiveness of sins can only be obtained through a RCC priest

Key Biblical Interpretations

- Matthew 16:18 “On this rock I will build my church”
 - Catholic teaching: The rock is Peter, not his confession
- John 6 “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life”
 - Catholic teaching: This is to be taken literally, not figuratively
- Luke 1:28 “Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with you.”
 - Catholic teaching: This means Mary was sinless
- Luke 2:48 “All generations will call me blessed”
 - Catholic teaching: This means we should venerate Mary
 - The Church rightly honors the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of ‘Mother of God,’ to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs.
 - This very special devotion...differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit (971)
- 2 Mc 12:46 “Thus, (Judas Maccabees) made atonement for the dead that they might be free from sin”
 - Catholic teaching: This means praying for the dead can release them from their sins; It also supports the concept of Purgatory
- I Cor 3:15 “he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.”
 - Catholic teaching: This means purgatory

The Catechism on Doubt

- There are various ways of sinning against faith: Voluntary doubt...refuses to hold as true what God has revealed and the Church proposes for belief (2088)

Excerpts from “The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Understanding Catholicism”

Ch 9. Tasting, Touching, Smelling God

The senses are God’s gateway to the human mind and imagination. For this reason, Catholics emphasize ritual more than learning. If the imagination is not excited, the intellectual and philosophical underpinnings are meaningless. The bells, beads, and candles used in Catholic rituals are not just decorations; they are essential to spirituality and to effective Catholicism.

They can touch God, feel him, taste him, bring him inside themselves through the scent of incense, and see him in the colors of the vestment. (p. 118)

When Catholics touch their rosaries, they touch their God. (p. 119)

Another important ingredient in Catholic ceremony is fire, which is why candles are a requirement for any Catholic Mass. Before leaving the church, most Catholics will probably place a few coins in a metal stand that holds 20 to 40 small candles. They might

then light a candle and say a prayer for a special intention or for a loved one. The candle burns for several hours as a reminder of the prayers being offered. It also tells God, "If I could stay longer, I would, but I have to go now, so I'll leave this little candle burning in my stead." (p. 121)

Ritual changes our consciousness and puts our brain in a dream-like state. This dream state is an important part of Catholic religious experience because God speaks to us through dreams. The challenge today, as always, is to know how to hear the voice of God. Catholic ritual is attuned to this dream communication. (p. 125)

Catholics do have codes of behavior, such as the Ten Commandments and the teachings of the church, to inform them. But the key to conscience is to match intuitive knowing with what we have learned, which is why the church has always said the bottom line in making a moral decision is "to follow your conscience." In order to do this, you have to be able to access the part of the mind where feelings reside. Again, Catholicism's high degree of ritual and ceremony makes this access easier. (p. 125)

Protestants worship from the neck up. Catholics do it from the neck down. (p. 126)

Perhaps the best example of the vitality of Catholic imagery is the Catholic veneration of Mary, which may well be the place where Protestants and Catholics differ most. Through Mary, Catholics experience the female face of God. She is a mother, loving, relational, and most of all, flesh and blood. (p. 127)

Purgatory was once thought to be an actual place, but it is now commonly believed to be a condition of purification necessary before being admitted to the glory and happiness of heaven. It is a state of passive suffering, which means that the suffering stems from being delayed in seeing God and enjoying the heavenly reward. (p. 207)

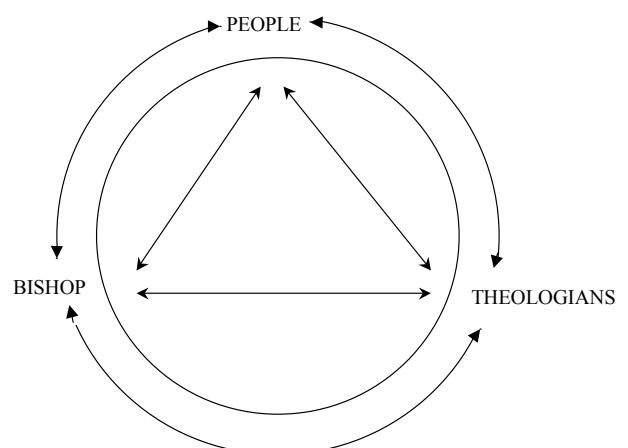
Ch 16. The Teaching Church

How can Biblical teaching be realigned in the light of new truths? One way is by rethinking how the Bible functions. Many have come to see that the Bible is transmitting important truth to the people at the level of poetry and myth. (p. 254)

Myth is a story that tells the beliefs of a group of people regarding their origins, history, and destiny. Myth is neither historically true nor false. Myths transmit truths that cannot be understood apart from the story. In other words, you must look below the surface of the mythological story to find the meaning of it.

The Dynamic Triangle: The People, Theologians, and Bishops

A new teaching goes out to the people, usually in the form of a letter from the bishops. The people choose to accept the belief or reject it. Keep in mind that the church acts as an advisor in matters of faith; it is ultimately up to the people to determine what is true for them. (p. 256)



Ch 18. The Teachings of the Church

Post-Vatican II church morality takes a larger and more positive approach to sin than the Catholic Church did in the past. (p. 263) New beliefs emphasize people's basic goodness and build on it. Although sin is often thought of as a violation against God, it is actually a violation against ourselves, our neighbors, and all creation. The understanding of sin today is focused on the law of love and informed by the human sciences. (p. 264)

The pre-Vatican II approach to sin was to look at it as commission, meaning what people did; the post-Vatican II emphasis is on "omission", or what people have failed to do. If you sin, look within! If you notice you're continually falling short of what you know to be right, you're in a potentially sinful pattern. At the end of the day, spend a few moments going over your day to see whether you are acting in accordance with your ideals. (p. 266)

The doctrine of original sin is still a central dogma of the Catholic Church, and contemporary theologians struggle to keep its meaning relevant in the light of science and psychology. The underlying belief is that Christ's redemption, which is characterized by love and forgiveness, is at the very heart and soul of the divine plan. All humans are in need of the redemption he offers. The Biblical story of Adam, Eve, the snake, and the tree is not a literal description of a historical first sin, but it is a description of what it means to be human. It is not necessarily telling what happened at the beginning of human history, but rather is reminding us of what is happening all the time in the human struggle. When viewed this way, the story of the fall tells us of the inevitable mix of good and evil contained in human existence. Our highest motives at best are mixed and ambiguous. (p. 267)

The seven capital sins are: • Pride • Envy • Anger • Sloth • Greed • Gluttony • Lust

Although they are called sins, these seven characteristics are not sins in and of themselves. Instead, they describe tendencies toward sinning or character weaknesses through which sin occurs. You can't sin in your mind or heart. People tend to regard feelings and emotions as having moral significance. Emotions and feelings are not sinful. Some Catholics confess anger and lust when they have not acted on these feelings. By themselves, the seven capital sins are human conditions that we all struggle with. (p. 268)

Hell: The Eternal Loss of God

Our free will allows us to cooperate or not to cooperate with God and to accept or refuse to enter into the loving relationship we are offered. Hell is the pain produced by our choice of utterly and deliberately refusing to live in relationship with God, if such a choice is even possible. Speaking on the subject of hell, Pope John Paul II said not to consider it a place, but rather a state that the soul suffers when it denies itself access to God. (p. 272)

Hell is the ultimate consequence of sin. To describe this reality, scripture used symbolic language. They are used as an analogy to show the complete desperation and emptiness of life without God. Images of hell are a poetic warning. The pope went on to say that God has never revealed "whether or which human beings" are eternally damned. The Bible often teaches with parables, stories, and metaphors, so the Biblical images of everlasting fire are poetic warnings of what it would be like to be without God. (p. 273)

Through revelation, Pope John Paul II says, we are taught that "heaven or happiness" is "neither an abstraction nor a physical place in the clouds, but a living personal relationship with the Holy Trinity." In attempting to describe ultimate realities, language always falls short, he reminds us. In the new interpretation, heaven is not a place of ideal real estate, but a description of the soul when it is in its completed form. (p. 274)

2. The Reformation

Reference Materials

Texts

- The Story of the Christian Church (Hurlbut)
- The Idiot's Guide to the Reformation & Protestantism (Bell & Sumner)
- Church History in Plain Language (Shelley)
- The 100 Most Important Events in Church History (Curtis, et al)
- The History of Christianity (Dowley)
- Charts of Church History (Walton)
- Foxe's Book of Martyrs
- Roman Catholicism (Armstrong, et al)
- The Keys of This Blood (Martin)
- Halley's Bible Handbook
- A Woman Rides the Beast (Hunt)

Church History Web Sites

- Overview of Reformation & church history (the best!): ritchies.net/churchhi_text.htm
- Reformation in general; Issues for today: modernreformation.org
- Christian History, Century by Century: gospelcom.net/chi/EVENTSF/cnt16.shtml
- Reformation Timelines: timelines.info/history/ages_and_periods/the_reformation
- History of the Reformation & the Popes: wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation
 - wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_popes
- Wm Tyndale & the Making of the English Bible: williamtyndale.com
- The Gutenberg Bible online: hrc.utexas.edu/gutenberg

Early Church History

Map of Church History

- By the late Don Kies of Grace Bible Church, Elmhurst
- Observations:
 - The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) wasn't the only church around in any era
 - The church in the first 500 years didn't look anything at all like today's RCC
 - The evangelical church (shown in red) never really died out, but it often lived in the shadow of the dominant churches

Summary of Church History

- Four 500-year periods, C-O-P-S:
 - C (ca 500 AD) The Catholic Church begins to take shape
 - O (ca 1000 AD) The Orthodox Church comes into its own
 - P (ca 1500 AD) The Protestant Church emerges
 - S (ca 2000 AD) The Syncretistic Church beginning to congeal (?)

The Corruption of the Church

- Began in 313
 - Constantine's Vision
 - Elevation of the Church as the State Religion of the Roman Empire in 381
- The mixed influence of Augustine (354-430), a man appealed to by both RC & Protestant apologists
 - High view of the institutional & hierarchical church
 - Necessity of baptism for salvation & hence baptism of infants was not to be denied
 - Confusion of justification with sanctification

The Rise & Politicalization of the Papacy

- Acknowledgement of Roman Bishop as "Pope" 450-650
- Expansion of Political Power (1000-1250) under Hildebrand (Gregory VII) & Innocent III
- Roman Church answered to God alone, no earthly rulers
- The Pope had power over all Bishops
- His feet should be kissed by "all princes"

Seeds of Dissent

The Seeds of Dissent (1300-1517)

- Explorers & empires
- Papal taxation & church possessions
- The rising patriotism in Europe
 - an unwillingness to submit to a foreign rule over their own national churches
 - a determination to abridge the power of the church councils, bringing the clergy under the same laws & courts with the laity
- Invention of the printing press
 - The Bible was the first book printed & became readily available
 - The Church faced an intense public scrutiny
 - Criticism of the RCC, from within & without, traveled quickly across Europe
 - Writings of the Reformers were widely circulated, criticizing the Church's corruption & preoccupation with material wealth
 - The people soon realized the papal church was far from the New Testament ideal
- The sale of Indulgences, signed by the pope himself, purporting to bestow the pardon of all sins, not only upon the holders of the certificates, but upon friends living or dead...without confession, repentance, penance, or absolution by a priest
- Clerical immorality & greed
- Sale of church offices
- Loss of Papal prestige
 - The Babylonian Captivity & the Great Schism
 - The Crusades & the Inquisitions
- The Renaissance & biblical Humanism

The 40-year Papal Schism (1377-1417)

DATE	ROMAN POPES	AVIGNON POPES	CONCILIAR POPES
1375		GREGORY XI (1370-78) Died in 1378, setting stage for Schism	
1378	URBAN VI (1378-89)	CLEMENT VII (1378-94)	
1381	Ended "Babylonian Captivity"	After 3 years of warfare with supporters of Urban VI, moved to Avignon in 1381	
1384	but caused Schism by alienating French cardinals		
1387			
1390	BONIFACE IX (1389-1404)		
1393		BENEDICT XIII (1394-1417)	
1396		Disposed by Council of Pisa in 1409, but refused to step down; Deposed by Council of Constance in 1417; returned to Spain, convinced to his dying day that he was the true pope	
1399			
1402			
1405	INNOCENT VII (1404-06)		ALEXANDER V (1409-10) Appointed by Council of Pisa
1408	GREGORY XII (1406-15)		JOHN XXIII (1410-15) Deposed by Constance in 1415
1411	Deposed by Council of Pisa in 1409, but refused to step down; deposed by Council of Constance in 1415		
1414			
1417			MARTIN V (1417-31) Named by Council of Constance to end Schism
1420			
1423			

- 2 sets of Popes (at Rome & at Avignon, France)
 - Each excommunicated the other
 - Often 2 priests at each parish
 - Council at Pisa (1409) chose a new Pope, Alexander V, & asked the others to step down, which they refused
- Now, there were 3 Popes
 - Alexander V was poisoned by his successor, John XXIII
 - John XXIII called the Council of Constance (1414)
 - This Council deposed all 3 Popes & jailed John XXIII for 3 years for piracy, murder, rape, sodomy & incest
 - The Council also burned Jan Hus at the stake for preaching church reform

Cardinal Ratzinger explains: Why the Reformation

- For nearly half a century, the RCC was split into two or three obediences that excommunicated one another, so that every Catholic lived under excommunication by one pope or another, and, in the last analysis, no one could say with certainty which of the contenders had right on his side. The Church no longer offered certainty of salvation; she had become questionable in her whole objective form. The true Church, the true pledge of salvation, had to be sought outside the institution. It is against this background of a profoundly shaken ecclesial consciousness that we are to understand that Luther, in the conflict between his search for salvation & the tradition of the Church, ultimately came to experience the Church, not as the guarantor, but as the adversary of salvation.

A Great Humanist: Desiderius Erasmus (1467–1536)

- A committed Catholic; Not one to make waves
- One of the greatest Humanist scholars
- His translation of the New Testament demonstrated the corruption of the Latin Vulgate text (used by RCC)
- Discovered that the Vulgate's translation of Matt 4:17 as "Do penance" really should have been "Repent"
- Realized that the traditional translation "to make righteous" should be "to declare righteous"
- Came to believe salvation is by faith, not works
- Called indulgences the "crime of false pardons"
- Believed the Bible should be made available to all people
- Criticized the Church, its tradition, papacy & clergy
- Exposed the corruption of the Church, such as clerical concubinage & the cruel dealing of so called "heretics"
- An unwitting forerunner of the Reformation
- Nevertheless, it was said: "Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched"

Early Calls for Reform

Forerunners of the Reformation

- John Wycliffe (1328-1384)
 - Christ is the head of the Church, not the Pope
 - Bible is sole authority, not the Church
 - Church should follow Biblical model of government with equality of all believers
 - Denied Transubstantiation
 - Translated the Bible into the English vernacular
 - Called the Morningstar of the Reformation
 - Body was exhumed & burned at the stake by the RCC 44 years after his death
- John Hus (1373-1415)
 - Influenced by John Wycliffe's teaching
 - Emphasized authority of Scripture
 - Opposed indulgences, icons & religious relics
 - His followers, Moravians, were very evangelistic
 - Burned at stake as a heretic by the RCC
 - Influenced Martin Luther

Reformation Summary

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

- In my judgment & in the judgment of many men of God, Bible historians & religious leaders, Martin Luther was one of the greatest men God has given humanity since the Apostle Paul. - Peter Melvin

The Accidental Revolutionary: Martin Luther

- Born to a prosperous German businessman
- 1505: Entered Augustinian monastery

- 1508: Became a Bible teacher at Univ. of Wittenberg
- Great burden over his sense of sin led to continual penance & anguish of soul
- Came to believe that “Reason is a whore”
- Traded in Aristotle for Augustine & decided the only way to find the truth is through divine revelation
- The abuse in the selling of indulgences provoked the 95 Theses, nailed to the Wittenberg Door on 10/31/1517
 - John Tetzel was raising money for the completion of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome

The 95 Theses (selected)

**Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther
on the Power & Efficacy of Indulgences
by Dr. Martin Luther (1517)**

Out of love for the truth & the desire to bring it to light, the following propositions will be discussed at Wittenberg, under the presidency of the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts & of Sacred Theology, & Lecturer in Ordinary on the same at that place. Wherefore he requests that those who are unable to be present & debate orally with us, may do so by letter.

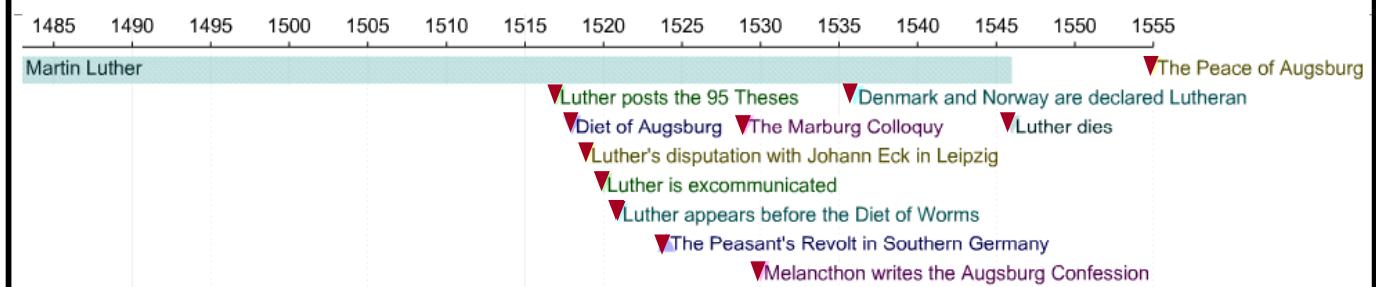
- 25. The power which the pope has, in a general way, over purgatory, is just like the power which any bishop or curate has, in a special way, within his own diocese or parish
- 27. They preach man who say that so soon as the penny jingles into the money-box, the soul flies out (of purgatory)
- 29. Who knows whether all the souls in purgatory wish to be bought out of it
- 36. Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty & guilt, even without letters of pardon
- 41. Apostolic pardons are to be preached with caution, lest the people may falsely think them preferable to other good works of love
- 42. Christians are to be taught that the pope does not intend the buying of pardons to be compared in any way to works of mercy
- 43. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better work than buying pardons
- 50. Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the indulgence preachers, he would rather that the basilica of Saint Peter were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh and bones of his sheep
- 76. We say, on the contrary, that the papal pardons are not able to remove the very least of venial sins, so far as its guilt is concerned
- 82. Why does not the pope empty purgatory, for the sake of holy love & of the dire need of the souls that are there, if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a Church?
- 86. Why does not the pope, whose wealth is today greater than the riches of the richest, build just this one church of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with the money of poor believers?

Reformation Timelines

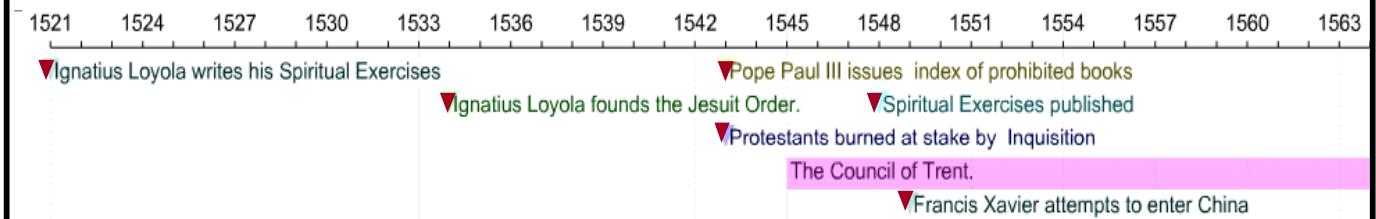
Reformation Overview



Lutheran Reformation



Catholic Reformation



Key Events

- Aug 1518: Called before the Pope, Luther hopes to convince him
- Nov 1518: Luther appeals for a church council to correct the Pope & the errors of the church
- 1519: At the debate between Eck & Carlstadt, Luther charged with the errors of Hus (burned 4 years earlier)
 - Luther realizes Hus was right, thus the Pope & a church council can err
- Luther writes 3 major works trying to reform the RCC
- 1520: The Papal bull is issued excommunicating Luther; Luther publicly burns it
- 1521: Promised safe-passage from the Emperor, Luther appears before at the Diet of Worms & is asked to recant

Luther's Answer at Worms

- "Unless I am refuted & convicted by testimonies of the Scriptures or by clear arguments (since I believe neither the Pope nor the councils alone; it being evident that they have often erred & contradicted themselves), I am conquered by the Holy Scriptures quoted by me, & my conscience is bound in the word of God: I can not & will not recant any thing, since it is unsafe & dangerous to do any thing against the conscience."
- Some accounts say he ended by saying "Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen."

The Zurich Reformer: Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)

- Influenced by Luther, but went further
 - 1525: Zwingli re-baptized adults
 - The first to deny the "Real Presence", teaching that the Lord's supper was a memorial only
 - Puritan influences led to thorough reform of all outward ceremonies
- 1529 (Marburg Colloquy): Meeting of major Reformers, Luther, Zwingli, Melanchthon, Bucer, etc.
 - Agreed on 14 articles of faith
 - Not on Christ's "real presence" in the Eucharist
- 1531: Killed in battle against Catholic forces
 - Protestant movement in Switzerland was stopped

Views of the Eucharist/Lord's Supper

- Catholicism's Transubstantiation: Christ's body and blood replace the substance of bread and wine
- Luther's "Real Presence" (Consubstantiation): Christ's physical body and blood are present in, with, and under the bread and wine, which remains bread and wine
- Zwingli: The Lord's Supper was a memorial or remembrance of Christ's death which increased the faith of believers

The Heart, Soul & Mind of the Reformation: John Calvin (1509-1564)

- Entered the University of Paris at the age of 14
- 1533/4: converted to Protestantism; soon fled for his life
- In 1536, he wrote The Institutes of the Christian Religion to encourage the king of France to be sympathetic to the new movement
 - The "Tutes" was the textbook of the Reformation & acknowledged as one of the greatest Christian books
 - 1536: Calvin in Geneva helped William Farel establish the Reformation in the region
 - Geneva & Calvin was the springboard for the spread of the Reformation throughout Europe
 - The government of the Geneva churches became the model for Reformed churches
- Defended Reformation doctrine against the counterattacks of the Roman Catholic Church

The Misfits: The Anabaptists

- These "Radical" Reformers went further than did the mainstream (or "Magisterial" Reformers)
 - Taught believers' baptism rather than infant baptism
 - Emphasized piety

- Held an aversion to the state-run churches, whether Catholic or Protestant
- Believed in a “gathered” church, members meeting because they believed, not because of state intervention or mandatory church attendance
- Held a policy of nonviolence & nonresistance
- Persecuted cruelly by Catholics & Protestants alike
- Denominational names included Mennonites, Hutterites, Brethren & Amish

Philosophy

- Luther: Allow whatever the Bible doesn’t prohibit
- Zwingli: Reject whatever the Bible doesn’t prescribe

Religions Defined by

- Lutheranism: Justification by faith
- Reformed Christianity: Adherence to Scripture

Today’s Evangelicalism derives from:

- Reformed theology merged with the Moravian/Wesleyan/Great Awakening strains
- A giving up of its love for the Constantinian state church

Reformation Changes

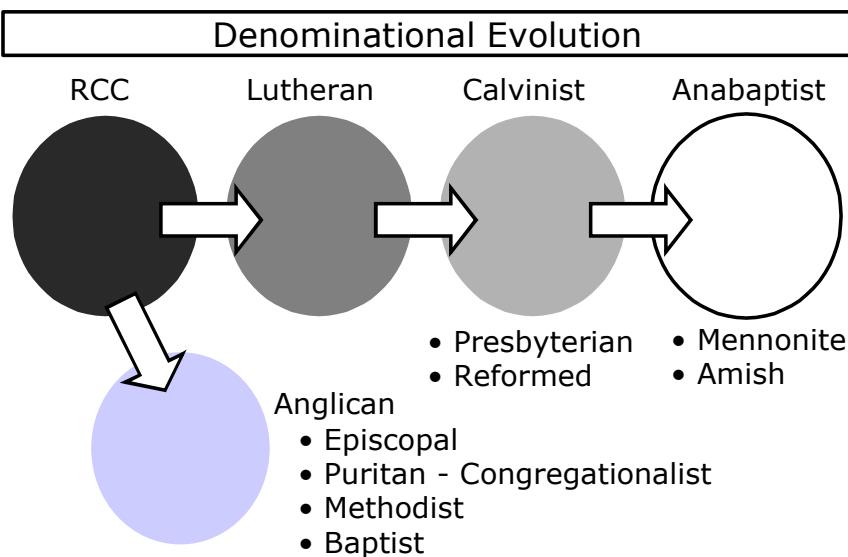
Religious Changes

- Scriptural Religion ▫ Rational Religion ▫ Personal Religion ▫ Spiritual Religion
- National Religion
- More on these in the next chapter

Theological Issues

- The key principles of the Reformation have been summarized in what is known as the 5 Solas:
 - Sola Scriptura ▫ Sola Fide ▫ Sola Gratia ▫ Solo Christo ▫ Soli Deo Gloria
- More on these in the next chapter

Denominational Evolution



Reformation Reaction

The Catholic (Counter) Reformation

- Some Papal reform regarding personal morality
- 1540: Founding of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)
 - Absolute & unconditional obedience to the Pope
 - Their supreme aim: the destruction of heresy
- 1563: Council of Trent, with clarification of RC doctrine
 - Clear denunciations of Protestant beliefs, such as justification by faith alone
 - Adding of the Apocryphal books to the Bible
- Rejuvenation & reorganization of the Inquisition
- 1559: Issuing of the “Index of Forbidden Books”
- “Wars of Religion” leading to forced re-conversion of certain areas of Europe from Protestantism to Roman Catholicism

Reformation Impact

From “Civilization & the Protestant Reformation” (Robbins)

- Civilization as we know it began on October 31, 1517
- The debate Martin Luther began nearly 500 years ago turned the world upside down. Democracy, civil rights & liberties, constitutional government, religious liberty, & the free market all find their roots in the Reformation.
- His second major contribution to Western political thought was the idea of a written constitution—the Bible—limiting the power & authority of church (& later political) leaders. There is a direct connection between the Reformation cry of sola Scriptura & the American idea of the Constitution—not any man or body of men—as the supreme law of the land.
- By articulating the Biblical doctrine of faith as wholly a gift of God, Luther undermined the Catholic Inquisition & formulated the theological rationale for religious liberty.
- One of Luther’s most brilliant followers, John Calvin, systematized the theology of the Reformation. The seventeenth-century Calvinists laid the foundations for both English & American civil rights & liberties: freedom of speech, press, & religion, the privilege against self-incrimination, the independence of juries, & right of habeas corpus, the right not to be imprisoned without cause. The nineteenth-century German historian Leopold von Ranke referred to Calvin as the “virtual founder of America.”
- The German sociologist Max Weber wrote a book in 1905 titled “The Protestant Ethic & the Spirit of Capitalism” in which he argued that capitalism historically emerged in Protestant countries because they inculcated those virtues that led to the development of capitalism:
 - Hard work ▫ Honesty ▫ Frugality ▫ Thrift ▫ Punctuality
- These virtues, coupled with the idea of a calling, provided the impetus ending serfdom & establishing a free political & economic order. The theology & values of the Bible, rediscovered by the Protestant Reformers in the 16th century, have been the principal ideas creating what we know as Western civilization.

“Understanding Catholicism” on the Reformation

From Chapter 22

- Trouble that had brewing for some time was about to boil over. First, the Greek church split off from Rome over the differences in politics, ritual, and language. Then a couple of protesters, one of them a monk (Martin Luther) and the other a king (Henry VIII), turned against the church, taking big portions of Europe with them. These events finally forced the church to examine its practices and role. Although church leaders instituted major reforms, the church never again captured the unifying power it had.

Indulge Me, One More Time

- Nobody knows when the practice of selling indulgences began, but it blossomed during the 1400s and 1500s. *Relics* of the saints were often displayed for a price and sometimes sold. Relics were a popular religious sacramental of the time. They consisted of pieces of wood, said to be from the authentic cross, or pieces of cloth, hair, or bone that were believed to belong to one of the saints. Money from the sale of these goods were used to finance the building of the cathedrals and fund the extravagant lifestyle of the clergy.
- *Indulgence* was a term that describes the remission of punishment due for sins. The church supported its belief of what was right and wrong with the idea of a punishment in the afterlife. It assigned a spiritual value to certain practices or prayers. The performance of these is said to erase spiritual debt. If a sin were committed, an indulgence is like a “get out of jail free” card from Monopoly. This practice went on until it was officially condemned in 1562, but not before it became the proverbial straw that broke the back of the Western church. Indulgences are still part of the church today; however, they are not sold.

Problems, Protest, and Protestants

- The church, having partnered with the state in the Inquisition, employed increasingly more authoritarian means to thwart any diversity of thought or question of its dogma. Its use of power and control, albeit for intended purpose of protecting the teachings of Jesus, had taken it far from its original mission.
- Against this backdrop of corruption, a sound could be heard, a tap, tap, tap in Wittenberg, a small town in Germany. The sound came from a hammer banging against the large cathedral door. When the sun rose on that October morning in 1517, it shone on a large piece of paper known as the *95 Theses* on which were listed 95 complaints against the Catholic Church. The man who wrote the paper and nailed it to the door was Martin Luther. It was not long before the document was discussed all over Europe, and the *Protestant Reformation* was born.
- On the heels of Luther’s protest, Henry VIII, the king of England, broke with Rome and declared himself head of the church of England. The differences in the beginning were political rather than religious, a quarrel between the king and the pope, which was not unusual in the Middle Ages. However, this quarrel went on to result in a permanent schism.

3. Protestant Distinctives

Reference Materials

Protestantism Texts

- A Heritage of Great Evangelical Teaching (Nelson Publishers)
- Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion
- Welcome to the Family (Phillips & Okholm)
- One Lord, One Faith (Koivisto)
- Who are the Evangelicals (Tidball)
- The Worldly Evangelicals (Quebedeaux)
- Getting Evangelicals Saved (Reidhead)
- Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail (Webber)
- Evangelical Catholics (Fournier)

Web Sites on the Protestantism

- Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals: alliancenet.org
- graceonlinelibrary.org

Reformation Religious Changes

From: The Story of the Christian Church

1. Scriptural Religion

- Rome had substituted the authority of the church for that of the Bible; They taught that the church was infallible, & that the authority of the Bible proceeded from its authorization by the church
- They withheld the Scriptures from the laity, & strongly opposed every translation of them into the language spoken by the common people
- The reformers declared that no doctrine was to be accepted unless it was taught in the Bible; They brought a lost Bible back to the people

2. Rational Religion

- Another principle established by the Reformation was that religion should be rational and intelligent
- Romanism had introduced irrational doctrines like transubstantiation, preposterous pretensions like papal indulgence, superstitious usages like image-worship
- The reformers demanded a creed, a discipline, and a worship that should not outrage man's rational nature

3. Personal Religion

- A third great truth made emphatic in the Reformation was that of a personal religion; Under Rome, a closed gate stood between the worshipper and God, & to that gate the priest held the only key
- God was looked upon as an unfriendly Being, who must be appeased & placated by ascetic lives; The godly-minded could not go for guidance to the Bible, but must take its teachings at second-hand, as interpreted by the church

4. Spiritual Religion

- The reformers also insisted upon a spiritual as against a formal religion
- Rome had overloaded the simplicity of the gospel with a mass of forms and ceremonies in external services rendered under priestly direction, and not in the attitude of the heart toward God
- Undoubtedly there were many, earnest spiritual natures in the RCC, but throughout the church, in general, religion was of the letter & not of the spirit

5. National Religion

- The aim of the papacy & the priesthood had been to subordinate the state to the church, & to make the pope supreme over all nations
- Wherever Protestantism triumphed, a national church arose, self-governed, & independent of Rome (the exception being the Anabaptist movement which emphasized a free church, i.e. unconnected to the state)
- The worship in every RCC was in Latin, but every Protestant Church maintained its service in the language spoken by the worshippers

Reformation Theology

Scripture Alone

- The Reformers **affirmed** that:
 - The Scriptures are sufficient; the only rule for faith & practice; tradition submits to it
 - No new (man-made) rules or revelations; only the written Word is divinely inspired
 - All church members profit from Scripture
 - All teachings are to be subjected to Scripture
- The Reformers **denied** that:
 - Tradition is God's word handed down "verbally" and is to be treated with equal authority
 - The infallible teaching authority of the bishops extends the deposit of divine revelation
 - The church hierarchy explains Scripture
 - The church teachings cannot be questioned

Faith Alone

- The Reformers **affirmed** that:
 - We are dead in sins, unable to respond to God
 - All we can do is believe, and even that is a gift of God, not of man's initiation
- The Reformers **denied** that:
 - We can and must cooperate with grace
 - Faith is necessary but not sufficient; we also need to help merit & maintain our salvation through a sacramental system of good works

Grace Alone

- The Reformers **affirmed** that:
 - Only God's grace makes us alive
 - We are not "made" righteous, but are declared so; Christ's righteousness is credited to our account (imputed)
 - Nothing in us is meritorious
 - We can be certain of our salvation
 - God wants obedience, not penance
 - We live by faith, not by rules
- The Reformers **denied** that:
 - While we're tainted by sin, we can cooperate with grace
 - We become more and more righteous as grace is "poured into" us (infused); God accepts us when we become good enough
 - We merit grace by doing the sacraments
 - It would be presumptuous to think we've done "enough"

Christ Alone

- The Reformers **affirmed** that:
 - Christ's death alone completely satisfies God's anger
 - Justification is a once for all event
 - Christ's righteousness is sufficient
 - Christ alone is our mediator (priest)
- The Reformers **denied** that:
 - We need Christ but we also need to suffer either here or in purgatory, & we may need the sacrifices of others
 - The sacrifice of the cross must be repeated continually in the Mass
 - We need the merits of other saints, or indulgences as the church dispenses them from its storehouse of merit
 - We need human priests to confess to & to confer the grace of the sacraments

Glory To God Alone

- The Reformers **affirmed** that:
 - Only God is our Father
 - Only God is holy
 - All believers are priests
 - We can pray directly to God & God alone
 - Whatever we do can be to God's glory
- The Reformers **denied** that:
 - Priests may be called Father
 - The Pope may be called Holy Father
 - The clerical calling is a special Grace
 - We may pray to Mary & the other saints
 - A monastic or ascetic life is a higher calling

Calvin on the Reformation

From "Roman Catholicism" (Armstrong)

- For Calvin, 5 prime theological concerns stood at the heart of the Reformation
 - 1. The Bible as the only religious authority
 - 2. Pure worship as God has commanded
 - 3. Justification by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ
 - 4. The 2 sacraments of baptism & the Lord's Supper
 - 5. The true pastoral teaching office for the church
- Rome had fundamentally corrupted all of these & thus had corrupted the spirituality & morality of the church
 - The thrust of the Reformation was to restore them

Were Calvin to evaluate Rome today

- He would have to conclude that Rome & Protestantism are further apart today than they were in the 16th century
 - 1. The Word of God is compromised not only by church traditions but also by corrosive criticism of its reliability
 - 2. Worship has become even more syncretistic; Also the status of Mary is further elevated
 - 3. Justification still rests on human cooperation, but it is often understood in a universalistic sense
 - 4. The sacraments, after Vatican II, may be administered somewhat more simply, but they continue to be understood in an idolatrous and magical manner
 - 5. The church continues to insist on the authority of its pope and traditions; Also the dogma of papal infallibility has been declared

Conclusions

- The reformers concluded: A church is a church only if:
 - (1) the true gospel is preached
 - (2) the sacraments are rightly administered, and
 - (3) a biblically-based church government exercises discipline over its members.
- Regarding the true gospel, the Reformation doctrine has been summed up:
 - **"Justification by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone"**
 - This has been acknowledged by most mainstream Protestants as the article by which the church stands or falls, and the tenet that distinguishes a true from a false church.

Post-Reformation Changes

State-Church Relations

- We no longer expect the state to enforce the faith
- We are more tolerant of variation on minor matters

The “Great Awakenings” & Revivals

- Re-emphasized the need to be genuinely converted—to be “born again”
- Challenged the belief that had set in that being baptized and living a decent, religious life is enough

Giving place to the “social gospel”

- Anti-slavery efforts, hospitals, humane prisons, etc.

Worldwide Missionary Efforts

Fundamentalist Renewal

Liberal theology influence mainline denominations

Ecumenical Movements

- Revisiting whether the Reformation was all a mistake

Some Key Bible Passages

Sola Scriptura

- 1 Cor 4:6 Do not go beyond what is written.
- 2 Tim 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
- Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Sola Fide

- Rom 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.
- Rom 4:5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Sola Gratia

- Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.
- Rom 9:16 It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.
- Phillip 3:9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.
- Salvation a Gift
 - Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - Eph 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

- Not by Law
 - Gal 2:15-16 We who are Jews by birth and not “Gentile sinners” know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.
 - Gal 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”
 - Gal 3:10-11 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse...Clearly no one is justified before God by the law.
- Grace or Works, Not Both
 - Gal 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.
 - Rom 11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.
- Certainty of Salvation
 - 1 John 5:11-13 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.
 - Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 - Rom 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Solo Christo

- Heb 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.
- Rom 5:19 Through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Soli Deo Gloria

- I Cor 10:31 Whatever you do, do all things to the glory of God.

Glories of Protestantism

Blessings & Benefits of Evangelical Protestantism

- Direct & immediate access to God
- Total forgiveness; Peace with God
- Assurance of salvation; Certainty of our standing
- Freedom from the obligations of the law
- Appreciation for living by faith & being led by the Spirit
- Understanding what Christ meant by “my yoke is easy and my burden is light”
- A knowledge of why the good news is called “good”
- Privilege to share the good news with the hurting, and the truth with the confused
- A genuine love of church & of worshipping God
- An opportunity to study God’s Word, to apply it to your life, and to grow to love it
- Confidence that God’s Word is sufficient and never changes

An Outsider's View of the Differences

The religioustolerance.org Web Site

- This web site is one that attempts to be fair to all religions, without taking sides. As such, it is an interesting viewpoint from someone “outside” of both the Catholic and Evangelical worlds to see how they compare the two faiths.
- Note: You may not always appreciate their “tolerant” (read: politically correct) slant.

Overview

- During the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation split the unity of Christendom in western Europe. The Protestant movement further fragmented during the following centuries. At the present time, they number over a thousand Christian denominations in North America alone.
- In recent years, we have seen many debates in which both Roman Catholics and conservative Protestants have attempted to preserve certain social traditions, in opposition to liberal religious groups, feminists, gays, lesbians, and some scientists, therapists, medical personnel etc. who have tried to bring about change in society. These conflicts have encouraged increasing cooperation between Catholics and conservative Protestants on matters such as restricting abortion access, maintenance of special rights for heterosexuals, etc.
- Both sections of Christendom agree on some major theological matters, like Angels, the Crucifixion, Jesus’ incarnation, bodily resurrection, and the imminent return of Jesus to earth in the second coming, Heaven, Hell, the Trinity, and the virgin birth of Jesus. They partly agree about baptism and the makeup of the Bible. But there exists a great gulf between the two groups on other matters of belief and church practice. The divisions are deep and long-standing. This has led to prejudice and discrimination. Hostility is particularly high in some countries in South America, where bloodshed has resulted. These conflicts have made it difficult for Catholics and Protestants to mount joint programs or cooperate on causes that they both support.
- Roman Catholic beliefs are compared below with those of Evangelical Christians. “...Evangelicals hold that the Catholic Church has gone beyond Scripture, adding teachings and practices that detract from or compromise the Gospel of God’s saving grace in Christ. Catholics, in turn, hold that such teaching and practices are grounded in Scripture and belong to the fullness of God’s revelation. Their rejection, Catholics say, results in a truncated and reduced understanding of the Christian reality.”

A Key Difference - Justification

- An individual is “justified” when “they are brought into right standing and into a right relationship with” God. Of all of the many points of disagreement between Roman Catholic and Evangelical Protestant belief, the mechanism by which a person becomes “justified” is perhaps the most important. Lutherans “refer to justification as ‘the chief doctrine upon which the church stands or falls.’”
- The “classical reformed view of Calvin and Luther” teaches that there are two steps to salvation:
 - 1. Each individual is hopelessly lost in sin. He/she is at enmity with God. She/he can’t even understand the gospel message; it appears as foolishness to them. Thus, the Holy Spirit must first intervene and change that person’s heart, so that they can begin to understand the gospel message, and develop a faith in Jesus. This is termed “regeneration” or “rebirth.”

- 2. When the individual uses their newfound faith to trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior and repents of past sins, they are “justified.” This is commonly referred to as being “saved.” Salvation is a once-and-for-all change. Once a person is saved, they remain saved forever. Even if the person commits a dreadful sin in the future, their salvation remains intact.
- The Roman Catholic position is more complex:
 - 1. Each infant is hopelessly lost in sin. In the past, the church taught that infants are indwelled by demonic spirits that must first be exorcised.
 - 2. The infant is baptized, by spreading water over its face or by total immersion. By this sacrament, regeneration and justification is automatically granted to the infant.
 - 3. When the person attains the age where they are responsible for their actions, and commits their first mortal sin, then the justification that they obtained at baptism is destroyed.
 - 4. Through the sacrament of Penance (confession), if they have faith, they can have justification restored.
 - 5. Steps 3 and 4 are often repeated many times during their life.
- Both Evangelicals and Roman Catholics believe in grace (“the free and unmerited assistance or favor or energy or saving presence of God in his dealings with humanity...”). But Evangelicals view grace as a direct action by and from God; Catholics view grace as originating from God, but flowing through the conduit of the sacraments. Evangelicals see salvation and justification as one-time events; Catholics look upon them as being repeatedly lost and potentially regained through the church’s sacraments.”

religioustolerance.org/chr_capr.htm

4. Scripture Alone; Faith Alone

Scripture Alone

The Issue

- To what degree does church tradition have authority on matters of faith & practice?
 - To the Reformers, Sola Scriptura was the foundational issue
- It may be the hardest “Sola” to defend
 - Once Sola Scriptura is established, the other 4 Sola’s can be supported by reasoning from Scripture
 - While Sola Scriptura is supported by Scripture, a thorough defense requires some additional reasoning as well
- This difference ultimately results in 2 totally different religions

Roman Catholic Tradition

From: gnfc.org/0203Freearticle.html (McCarthy)

The Catechism on Tradition & Authority

- The gospel was handed on in two ways: orally...and in writing
- This living transmission...is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture
- Sacred Scripture is the speech of God...and Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God
- As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, ‘does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone’
- Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others (76-95)

What is Catholic Tradition? First, it is not:

- Inherited culture or practices originating from merely human sources or from Church discipline and policy
- Sacred Tradition does not refer to matters such as:
 - priestly celibacy
 - the direction in which the priest faces while saying Mass, or
 - whether girls can serve alongside altar boys.
- These may rightly be called traditions; they are not sacred Tradition (with a capital letter), because the Church does not consider them to have their origin in divine revelation

Tradition is not:

- The conclusions of scholars who have studied the documents, history, and archaeology of the first centuries in search of the primitive Christian faith
 - Tradition is not the writings of early Christian leaders, ancient liturgies, or even the decrees of synods and ecumenical councils
 - These may be partial expressions of or witnesses to Tradition, but they are not sacred Tradition itself

Tradition is defined as:

- “Tradition is the word living continuously in the hearts of the faithful,” “the living memorial of God’s Word”
- Tradition is not something you can read or even lay your hands on
 - [Tradition]...is not an inanimate thing passed from hand to hand; it is not, properly speaking, an assemblage of doctrines and institutions consigned to books or other monuments...it must be represented as a current of life and truth coming from God through Christ and through the Apostles to the last of the faithful who repeats his creed and learns his catechism.
 - It...is not contained in books, but in people, in the life of the Church. It is the life experience of the Catholic faithful. It is revelation “...written principally in the Church’s heart rather than in documents and records”

Tradition is:

- A “living transmission” through which “...the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes”
- This...is accomplished in a variety of ways, such as:
 - the sign of the cross that a mother traces on the forehead of her child
 - teaching the basic prayers of Christianity, especially the “Our Father,” in the home and in religious instruction
 - by architecture and the plastic arts (especially representations of the cross, which is considered a privileged Christian symbol)
 - by the liturgy of the Church

Is Tradition the oral teaching of the Apostles?

- Catholic definitions equating Tradition with the oral teachings of the apostles are misleading. For example:
 - the Second Vatican Council described Tradition as revelation that the apostles passed on “...by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established...”
 - In support of this definition, the Council referred to Paul’s instruction to the Thessalonians: “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.” 2 Thess 2:15
- In citing this verse, the Church would have us believe that Tradition is equivalent to the Apostle Paul’s oral teachings
- This is misleading, however, because Roman Catholic Tradition is a far more complex concept; It is not the direct oral teaching of the apostles as referred to in 2 Thess 2:15
- Rather, Roman Catholic Tradition is “a current of life and truth”
- It can be as ethereal as an idea that, after having lain dormant for centuries, can spring to life in modern times through pious contemplation

Scripture and Roman Catholic Tradition are not equals

- The RCC teaches that “...both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal feelings of devotion and reverence.” But
 - The Scriptures are a written record of revelation. They are tangible, unalterable, and accessible to all. Moreover, they are an inspired record, “God-breathed,” the writings of “...men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” Scripture, therefore, is rightly called the Word of God

- Roman Catholic Tradition, on the other hand, is an amorphous body of beliefs and practices which the Church claims has been handed down for some 60 generations in “human formulas”:
 - a bishop teaching, a priest delivering a Sunday’s homily, a theologian writing, a mother reciting prayers with her children, a hymn, a stained glass window, or the unspoken “spiritual realities” shared by the faithful

Sola Scriptura: Excerpts from an Article by A. A. Hodge (1823-1886)

The article is still applicable today

The most succinct & thorough treatment of the subject

- From Outlines of Theology (Chapter Five) (excerpted by M. Dattoli)
- Originally published in 1860, Outlines of Theology is now in the public domain.
- See the complete article at: thehighway.com/Scripture_Hodge.html

THE RULE OF FAITH & PRACTICE

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, Having Been Given By Inspiration of God, Are the All-Sufficient and Only Rule of Faith and Practice, and Judge of Controversies.

1. What is meant by saying that the Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

Whatever God teaches or commands is of sovereign authority. Whatever conveys to us an infallible knowledge of his teachings and commands is an infallible rule. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only organs through which, during the present dispensation, God conveys to us a knowledge of his will about what we are to believe concerning himself, and what duties he requires of us.

2. What does the Catholic Church declare to be the infallible rule of faith and practice?

The Catholic theory is that the complete rule of faith and practice consists of Scripture and tradition, or the oral teaching of Christ and his apostles, handed down through the Church. Tradition they hold to be necessary, 1st, to teach additional truth not contained in the Scriptures; and, 2nd, to interpret Scripture. The Church being the divinely constituted depository and judge of both Scripture and tradition.—“Decrees of Council of Trent,” Session IV, and “Dens Theo.,” Tom. 2., N. 80 and 81.

3. By what arguments do they seek to establish the authority of tradition? By what criterion do they distinguish true traditions from false, and on what grounds do they base the authority of the traditions they receive?

1st. Their arguments in behalf of tradition are—(1.) Scripture authorizes it, 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6. (2.) The early fathers asserted its authority and founded their faith largely upon it. (3.) The oral teaching of Christ and his apostles, when clearly ascertained, is intrinsically of equal authority with their writings. The scriptures themselves are handed down to us by the evidence of tradition, and the stream cannot rise higher than its source. (4.) The necessity of the case. (a.) Scripture is obscure, needs tradition as its interpreter. (b.) Scripture is incomplete as a rule of faith and practice; since there are many doctrines and institutions, universally recognized, which are founded only upon tradition as a supplement to Scripture. (5.) Analogy. every state recognizes both written and unwritten, common and statute law.

2nd. The criterion by which they distinguish between true and false traditions is Catholic consent.

3rd. They defend the traditions which they hold to be true. (1.) On the ground of historical testimony, tracing them up to the apostles as their source. (2.) The authority of the Church expressed by Catholic consent.

4. By what arguments may the invalidity of all ecclesiastical tradition, as a part of our rule of faith and practice, be shown?

1st. The Scriptures do not, as claimed, ascribe authority to oral tradition. Tradition, as intended by Paul in the passage cited (2 Thess. 2:15, and 3:6), signifies all his instructions, oral and written, communicated to those very people themselves, not handed down. On the other hand, Christ rebuked this doctrine of the Pharisees, Matt. 15:3,6; Mark 7:7.

2nd. It is improbable a priori that God would supplement Scripture with tradition as part of our rule of faith. (1.) Because Scripture, as will be shown below (questions 7-14), is certain, definite, complete, and perspicuous. (2.) Because tradition, from its very nature, is indeterminate, and liable to become adulterated with every form of error. Besides, as will be shown below (question 20), the authority of Scripture does not rest ultimately upon tradition.

3rd. The whole ground upon which Catholics base the authority of their traditions (viz., history and church authority) is invalid. (1.) History utterly fails them. For more than three hundred years after the apostles they have very little, and that contradictory, evidence for any one of their traditions.

They are thus forced to the absurd assumption that what was taught in the fourth century was therefore taught in the third, and therefore in the first. (2.) The church is not infallible, as will be shown below (question 18).

4th. Their practice is inconsistent with their own principles. Many of the earliest and best attested traditions they do not receive. Many of their pretended traditions are recent inventions unknown to the ancients.

5th. Many of their traditions, such as relate to the priesthood, the sacrifice of the mass, etc., are plainly in direct opposition to Scripture. Yet the infallible church affirms the infallibility of Scripture. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

5. What is necessary to constitute a sole and infallible rule of faith?

Plenary inspiration, completeness, perspicuity or clarity, and accessibility.

6. What arguments do the Scriptures themselves afford in favor of the doctrine that they are the only infallible rule of faith?

1st. The Scriptures always speak in the name of God, and command faith and obedience.

2nd. Christ and his apostles always refer to the written Scriptures, then existing, as authority, and to no other rule of faith whatsoever.—Luke 16:29; 10:26; John 5:39; Rom. 4:3; 2 Tim. 3:15.

3rd. The Bereans are commended for bringing all questions, even apostolic teaching, to this test.—Acts 17:11; see also Isa. 8:16.

4th. Christ rebukes the Pharisees for adding to and perverting the Scriptures.—Matt. 15:7-9; Mark 7:5-8; see also Rev. 22:18, 19, and Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Josh. 1:7.

8. How may this completeness be proved, from the design of scripture?

The Scriptures profess to lead us to God. Whatever is necessary to that end they must teach us. If any supplementary rule, as tradition, is necessary to that end, they must refer us to it.

"Incompleteness here would be falsehood." But while one sacred writer constantly refers us to the writings of another, not one of them ever intimates to us either the necessity or the existence of any other rule.—John 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

10. In what sense do Protestants affirm and Catholics deny the perspicuity of Scripture?

Protestants...affirm that every essential article of faith and rule of practice is clearly revealed in Scripture, or may certainly be deduced therefrom. This much the least instructed Christian may learn at once; while, on the other hand, it is true, that with the advance of historical and critical knowledge, and by means of controversies, the Christian church is constantly making progress in the accurate interpretation of Scripture, and in the comprehension in its integrity of the system therein taught.

Protestants affirm and Catholics deny that private and unlearned Christians may safely be allowed to interpret Scripture for themselves.

11. How can the perspicuity of scripture be proved from the fact that it is a law and a message?

We saw (question 8) that Scripture is either complete or false, from its own professed design. We now prove its perspicuity upon the same principle. It professes to be (1) a law to be obeyed; (2) a revelation of truth to be believed, to be received by us in both aspects upon the penalty of eternal death. To suppose it not to be perspicuous, relatively to its design of commanding and teaching is to charge God with clearing with us in a spirit at once disingenuous and cruel.

12. In what passages is their perspicuity asserted?

Ps. 19:7,8; 119:105,130; 2 Cor. 3:14; 2 Pet. 1:18,19; Hab. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:15,17.

13. By what other arguments may this point be established?

1st. The Scriptures are addressed immediately, either to all men indiscriminately, or else to the whole body of believers as such.—Deut. 6:4-9; Luke 1:3; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; 4:2; Gal. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2; James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 2:12,14; Jude 1:1; Rev. 1:3,4; 2:7. The only exceptions are the epistles to Timothy and Titus.

2nd. All Christians indiscriminately are commanded to search the Scriptures.—2 Tim. 3:15,17; Acts 17:11; John 5:39.

3rd. Universal experience. We have the same evidence of the light-giving power of Scripture that we have of the same property in the sun. The argument to the contrary, is an insult to the understanding of the whole world of Bible readers.

4th. The essential unity in faith and practice, in spite of all circumstantial differences, of all Christian communities of every age and nation, who draw their religion directly from the open Scriptures.

14. What was the third quality required to constitute the scriptures the sufficient rule of faith and practice?

Accessibility. It is self-evident that this is the pre-eminent characteristic of the Scriptures, in contrast to tradition, which is in the custody of a corporation of priests, and to every other pretended rule whatsoever. The agency of the church in this matter is simply to give all currency to the word of God.

15. What is meant by saying that the Scriptures are the judge as well as the rule in questions of faith?

“A rule is a standard of judgment; a judge is the expounder and applier of that rule to the decision of particular cases.” The Protestant doctrine is:

1st. That the Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

2nd. (1.) negatively. That there is no body of men who are either qualified, or authorized, to interpret the Scriptures, or apply their principles to the decision of particular questions, in a sense binding upon the faith of their fellow Christians.

(2.) Positively. That Scripture is the only infallible voice in the church, and is to be interpreted, in its own light, and with the gracious help of the Holy Ghost, who is promised to every Christian (1 John 2:20-27), by each individual for himself; with the assistance, though not by the authority, of his fellow Christians. Creeds and confessions, as to form, bind only those who voluntarily profess them, and as to matter, they bind only so far as they affirm truly what the Bible teaches, and because the Bible does so teach.

16. What is the Catholic doctrine regarding the authority of the church as the infallible interpreter of the rule of faith and the authoritative judge of all controversies?

The Catholic doctrine is that the church is absolutely infallible in all matters of Christian faith and practice, and the divinely authorized depository and interpreter of the rule of faith.

The church, therefore, authoritatively determines—**1st.** What is Scripture. **2nd.** What is genuine tradition **3rd.** What is the true sense of Scripture and ‘tradition’, and what is the true application of that perfect rule to every particular question of belief or practice.

17. By what arguments do they seek to establish this authority?

1st. The promises of Christ, given, as they claim, to the apostles, and to their official successor, securing their infallibility, and consequent authority.—Matt. 16:18; 18:18-20; Luke 24:47-49; John 16:13; 20:23.

2nd. The commission given to the church as the teacher of the world.—Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 10:16, etc.

3rd. The church is declared to be “the pillar and ground of the truth,” and it is affirmed that “the gates of hell shall never prevail against her.”

4th. To the church is granted power to bind and loose, and he that will not hear the church is to be treated as a heathen. Matt. 16:19; 18:15-18.

5th. The church is commanded to discriminate between truth and error, and must consequently be qualified and authorized to do so—2 Thessalonians 3:6; Romans 16:17; 2 John 10.

6th. From the necessity of the case, men need and crave an ever-living, visible, and cotemporaneous infallible Interpreter and Judge.

7th. From universal analogy every community among men has the living judge as well as the written law, and the one would be of no value without the other.

18. By what arguments may this claim of the Catholic church be shown to be baseless?

1st. A claim vesting in mortal men a power so momentous can be established only by the most clear and certain evidence, and the failure to produce such converts the claim into a treason at once against God and the human race.

2nd. Her evidence fails, because the promises of Christ to preserve his church from extinction and from error do none of them go the length of pledging infallibility. The utmost promised is, that the true people of God shall never perish entirely from the earth, or be left to apostatize from the essentials of the faith.

3rd. Her evidence fails, because these promises of Christ were addressed not to the officers of the church as such, but to the body of true believers. Compare John 20:23 with Luke 24:33,47,48,49, and 1 John 2:20,27.

4th. Her evidence fails, because the church to which the precious promises of the Scriptures are pledged is not an external, visible society, the authority of which is vested in the hands of a perpetual line of apostles. For—(1.) the word church *ekklhsia* is a collective term, embracing the effectually called *klhōi* or regenerated.—Rom. 1:7; 8:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; etc. (2.) The attributes ascribed to the church prove it to consist alone of the true, spiritual people of God as such.—Eph. 5:27; 1 Pet. 2:5; John 10:27; Col. 1:18,24. (3.) The epistles are addressed to the church, and in their salutations explain that phrase as equivalent to “the called,” “the saints,” “all true worshippers of God;” witness the salutations of 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1st and 2nd Peter and Jude. The same attributes are ascribed to the members of the true church as such throughout the body of the Epistles.— 1 Cor. 1:30; 3:16; 6:11,19; Eph. 2:3-8, and 19-22; 1 Thess. 5:4,5; etc.

5th. The inspired apostles have had no successors. (1.) There is no evidence that they had such in the New Testament. (2.) While provision was made for the regular perpetuation of the offices of presbyter and deacon (1 Tim. 3:1-13), there are no directions given for the perpetuation of the apostolate. (3.) There is perfect silence concerning the continued existence of any apostles in the church in the writings of the early centuries. Both the name and the thing ceased. (4.) No one ever claiming to be one of their successors have possessed the “signs of an apostle.”—2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Cor. 9:1; Gal. 1:1,12; Acts 1:21,22.

6th. This claim, as it rests upon the authority of the Pope, is utterly unscriptural, because the Pope is not known to Scripture. As it rests upon the authority of the whole body of the bishops, expressed in their general consent, it is unscriptural for the reasons above shown, and it is, moreover, impracticable, since their universal judgment never has been and never can be impartially collected and pronounced.

7th. There can be no infallibility where there is not self-consistency. But as a matter of fact the Papal church has not been self-consistent in her teaching. (1.) She has taught different doctrines in different sections and ages. (2.) She affirms the infallibility of the holy Scriptures, and at the same time teaches a system plainly and radically inconsistent with their manifest sense; witness the doctrines of the priesthood, the mass, penance, of works, and of Mary worship. Therefore the Church of Rome hides the Scriptures from the people.

22. How may it be shown that the Catholic theory, as well as the Protestant, necessarily throws upon the people the obligation of private judgment?

Is there a God? Has he revealed himself? Has he established a church? Is that church an infallible teacher? Is private judgment a blind leader? Which of all pretended churches is the true one? Every one of these questions evidently must be settled in the Private judgment of the inquirer, before he can, rationally or irrationally, give up his private judgment to the direction of the self-asserting church. Thus of necessity Catholics appeal to the Scriptures to prove that the Scriptures cannot be understood, and address arguments to the private judgment of men to prove that private judgment is incompetent; thus basing an argument upon that which it is the object of the argument to prove is baseless.

Sola Fide

Sola Fide: The Issue

- Catholics & Protestants agree that Faith is necessary for salvation
- But is it sufficient all by itself (or alone)?⁹

Sola Fide: Its importance

- No doctrine of Scripture is more important than justification
 - Luther said, “It is the doctrine on which the church stands or falls”
- It involves the whole method of salvation of sinners
- It is connected to all other doctrines and issues of the Christian life
- It affects how we see God and how we see ourselves

Google search on “faith alone”: 91,000 hits

- They are all interesting to read!
 - At least I’d recommend the first 10 that I read.

Catholic Salvation

Justification According to Rome

- The transforming of the sinner from the state of unrighteousness to the state of holiness
- Justification comes about by means of faith in Christ, and in a life of good works
 - The Catholic Encyclopedia (newadvent.org/cathen/08573a.htm)
 - Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (text)

The adult must pass through a moral preparation:

- The Council of Trent assigns the first and most important place to faith
- The next step is a genuine sorrow for all sin with the resolution to begin a new life by receiving holy baptism and by observing the commandments of God
- The process of justification is then brought to a close by the baptism of water, inasmuch as by the grace of this sacrament the catechumen is freed from sin (original and personal) and its punishments, and is made a child of God
- The same process of justification is repeated in those who by mortal sin have lost their baptismal innocence; with this modification, however, that the Sacrament of Penance replaces baptism
- Considering merely the psychological analysis of the conversion of sinners, as given by the council, it is at once evident that **faith alone**, whether fiduciary or dogmatic, **cannot justify man** (Trent, l. c. can. XII)
- The two elements of active justification, **forgiveness of sin** and **sanctification**, furnish...freedom from sin and holiness
 - This freedom from sin and this sanctity are effected, not by two distinct and successive Divine acts, but by a single act of God
- The **infusion** of sanctifying grace...dispels from the soul original and mortal sin. (Cf. Trent, sess. VI, can. XI)

The Council of Trent: Rejection of "Faith Alone"

- Canon 9. If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema.
- Canon 11. If anyone says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins...let him be anathema.
- Canon 24. If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of the increase, let him be anathema.
- Canon 30. If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened, let him be anathema.
- Canon 32. If anyone says that the good works of the one justified are in such manner the gifts of God that they are not also the good merits of him justified; or that the one justified by the good works that he performs by the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ...does not truly merit an increase of grace and eternal life...let him be anathema.

ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/TRENT6.htm

Protestant Salvation

What does Scripture teach?

- Rom 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.
- Rom 4:5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.
- Eph 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.
- Gal 2:15-16 We who are Jews by birth and not “Gentile sinners” know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.
- Isaiah 53:5 With His stripes we are healed.
- Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.
- Rom 9:16 It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.
- Phill 3:9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.
- Gal 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.
- Rom 11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.
- Heb 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

What do we make of James 2:24?

- “You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.”
 - This is the only place in Scripture where the term “faith alone” occurs & it seems to support the Catholic position
- James is speaking of being justified before men, not God
 - In this case, “justified” means to be “made known,” “evidenced by,” or “manifested”
- It is the same use of the term as in Matt 11:19 & Luke 7:35 (“Wisdom is justified of her children”)
 - That is, other people cannot see inside you as God can
 - Only if they see your wise actions can they know you have wisdom
- Likewise, only if people see your works can they know you have faith

Misunderstanding of the Protestant position

- Some hear the Protestant position “faith alone apart from works” to mean “apart from the presence of works”, instead of its true meaning “apart from the merit of works”
- The Reformers understood this issue, saying “justification is by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone”

Analogy: Faith is not a “work”

- Strictly speaking, the true Christian church does not teach justification by faith; It teaches justification by Christ
- Where does the faith come in? It is simply the uniting with, joining, with, becoming one with, the Lord Jesus Christ
 - Being married to Christ, all that is His becomes His bride’s, the believer’s. A wife becomes a co-heir of all that belongs to her husband simply by being his wife, by her union with him in marriage. That is the fact: she is his wife. There is no virtue or merit in that. She simply possesses what now belongs to her by that relationship. Marriage is not a virtue that deserves a reward, but a relationship that brings the husband’s possessions along with him.
 - Consider a locomotive engine, its cars, and couplings. All the power to move the cars is in the locomotive. None of the power is in the couplings. Yet the locomotive, with all its power, cannot move one car without the coupling.

graceonlinelibrary.org/theology/full.asp?ID=254

Salvation Summary

These are 2 totally different religions

- Development of righteousness—Declaration of righteousness
- Accumulation of personal merit—Imputation of Christ’s merit
- Sin still requires my expiation—My sin imputed to Christ
- Trust Christ to help me save myself—Trust Christ alone to save me

This is no real surprise since they have different sources of authority

- He who chooses the beginning of a journey chooses its destination also

What is the implication of the anathemas of Trent?

- If the gospel message is indeed “Sola Fide”, then the RCC at Trent officially rejected, not only the Reformers, but the gospel as well

5. The Difference Diagram

Getting the Gospel Right

Presenting the Gospel Clearly

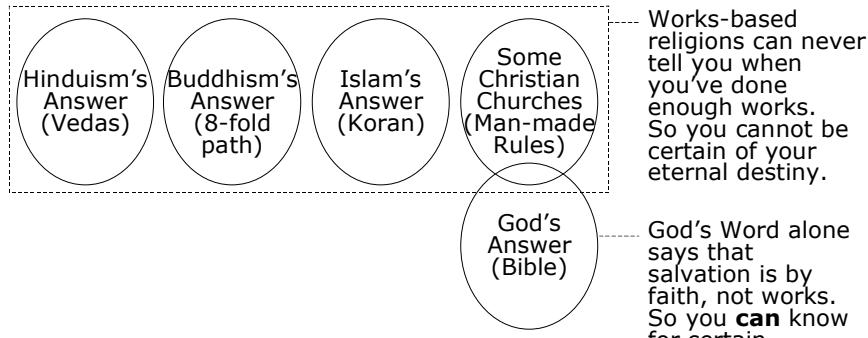
- 1. I recognize that I am a sinner in God's eyes.
 - Rom 3:10. There is no one righteous, not even one
 - Rom 3:23. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God
 - Matt 22:37-38. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
 - Matt 5: 27-28. You have heard that it was said, "Do not commit adultery." But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
 - James 2:10. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.
- 2. I understand that God is angry at me for my sin. The punishment which God has established for sin is spiritual death (or separation from God for all eternity). I stand in judgment of hell for my sins.
 - Rom 5:12. Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.
 - Rom 6:23. The wages of sin is death.
 - John 3:18. Whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.
 - John 3:36. Whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.
- 3. I admit my helplessness to save myself—that I cannot be good enough to earn God's favor.
 - Gal 2:16. Know that a man is not justified by observing the law...by observing the law no one will be justified.
 - Isa 64:6. All our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.
 - Rom 7:18. I know that nothing good lives in me.
- 4. I repent & seek the Lord earnestly.
 - Deut 4:29. But if you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.
 - Mark 1:15. Repent & believe the gospel.
 - Acts 3: 19. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.
 - 1 Pet 3:18. For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

- 5. I stop trusting in my own goodness.
 - Gal 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.
 - Rom 11:6. It is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.
 - Rom 3:28. A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.
 - Titus 3:5. He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.
 - Rom 4:5. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.
 - Gal 2:21. If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!
- 6. I believe in Jesus Christ & put my trust in him alone.
 - John 3:16. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
 - Acts 16:30-31. "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."
 - John 6:40. Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life.
- 7. I accept his free gift of forgiveness & eternal life.
 - Rom 6:23. The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - Eph 2:8-9. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.
 - John 1:12. To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.
- 8. I rest in the confidence that I am totally forgiven by God, at peace with him, & I am his child forever.
 - Eph 1:7. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.
 - Rom 4:7-8. Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.
 - Rom 5:1. Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Rom 8:1. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 - Eph 3:12. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.
 - John 8:34-36. Jesus replied "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."
 - 1 John 5:11-13. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Can We Be Sure We're Saved?

1st. How do we get right with God to begin with?

- Various answers...



2nd. What does it mean to be saved?

- God the father:
 - fulfills his eternal purpose; elected us before the world began; adopts us; gives us as a gift to Jesus; gives the gift of the Spirit as a down-payment; indwells us; makes us part of Christ's body
- Jesus, the son:
 - fulfills his promises to us; prays for us; advocates for (defends) us; is betrothed to the church
- The Holy Spirit:
 - seals us; baptizes us in Christ; witnesses to us of our salvation; fills us; leads us

3rd. Scripture says:

- to believe is to have eternal life; we have passed from death unto life; we will never perish
- we have peace; no one can press charges against us before God
- we are a new creation; we're citizens of heaven
- he gives us every good gift (including assurance); his gifts are irrevocable
- we can know we have eternal life

But some have misinterpreted passages of Scripture to the opposite conclusion:

- not recognizing hypothetical language; using non-doctrinal passages for establishing theology
- failing to properly understand the place of works in a Christian's life & how our works are judged
- failing to let the more clear passages of Scripture explain the less clear passages

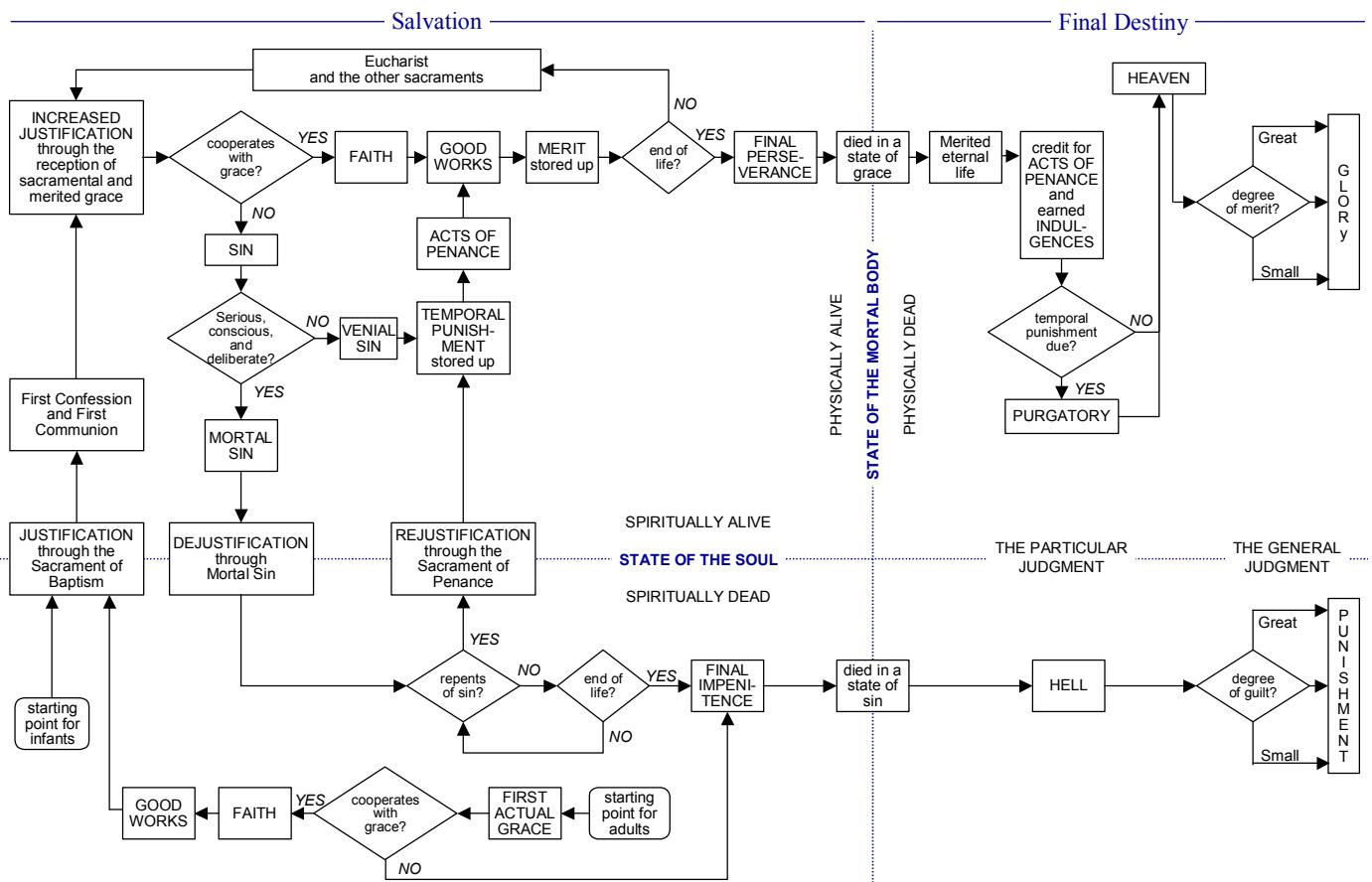
What might cause genuine Christians to doubt their salvation, a rather common occurrence?

- sin; attack by Satan; not staying close to God & his Word
- misunderstanding of salvation: what it means, how we attain it & how we grow in grace
- misinterpreting God's discipline, or his "silence"
- led to Christ by someone who explained it unclearly
- possibly a childhood decision

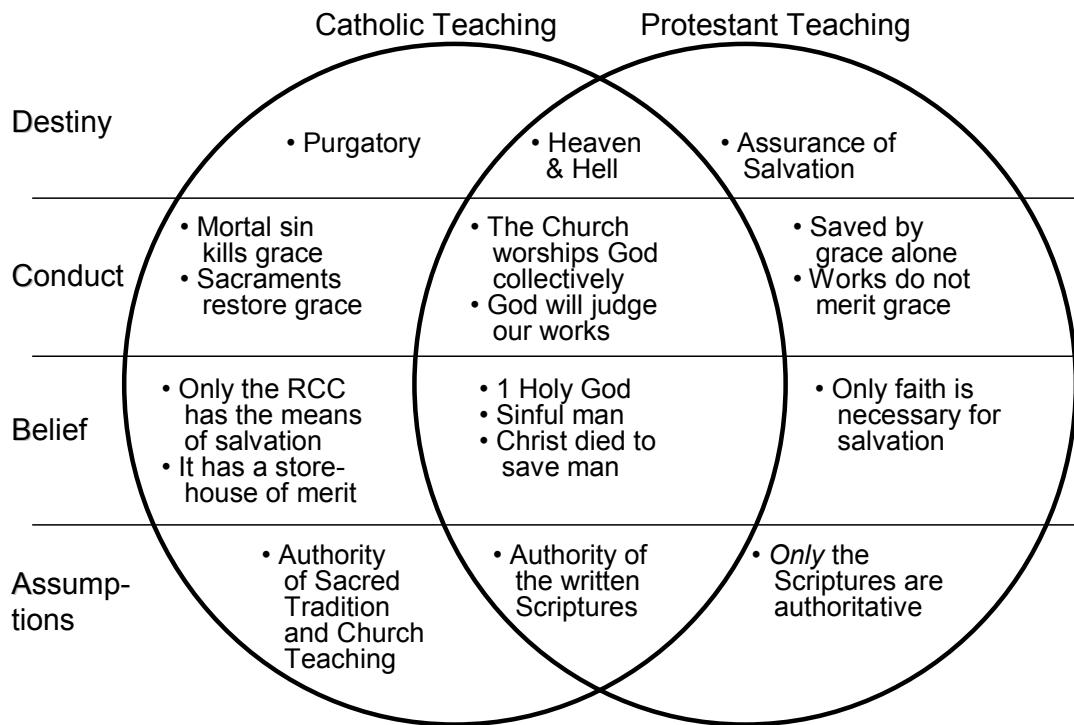
How might you resolve doubt?

- Pray; resolve any sin issues with God; forgive & love others where you may be falling short
- Study Scriptures on this topic; Trust God's Word & Jesus' statements more than your feelings
- Recognize the signs of salvation:
 - New awareness of right and wrong
 - hunger for God's Word
 - desire for a changed life
 - increase in testing
 - love for other Christians
 - desire to tell others about Christ
- 3 John 1:11 says you **do** good because you **are** good (born of God)

The Gospel According to Rome



The Difference Diagram



Listening Between the Lines

Can you tell by listening who is a true believer?

Listening "between the lines"

- The gospel is simple, yet it isn't.
- Don't read too much into "catch-phrases."
 - A Catholic "has received Christ" (at the last Eucharist)
 - 20% of Mormons claim to be "born again"
 - Most "Christians" believe "Christ died for their sins"
 - Many "Christians" are "saved" because they're baptized
 - Many wolves in sheep's clothing claim to "love Jesus"
- Careful of anyone who states what they "did" (or do) as reason for their Christian status (walked the aisle)
- Don't assume another's salvation based on 1 statement
 - Get them to explain their terms
 - Ask them how they became a Christian
- Listen for the Reformation "Solas"; trusting in Christ alone

Preparation

Know your role

- Study to show yourself an approved workman.
- Always be ready to give an answer for the hope that lies within you.
- Be an ambassador. Be a contagious Christian. Be genuine & sincere. Share with a heart of love for the lost—not out of obligation or to “carve another notch on your spiritual belt.”
- As a good fisherman, use the right “lure.” To the degree you know the person, tap into their real needs.
- Recent studies show that, on average, a person gets to know 5-10 true Christians before they become one. So inviting them to social functions where they can meet other believers may be a strategic move.
- Entice. For a “party-line” Catholic, “lure” them with the things they do not have. This would include total forgiveness, direct access to God, certainty of salvation, freedom from the obligations of the law, a love of God’s church and God’s Word. For example, let them wonder why you enjoy going to your church or reading the Bible so much.
- Be polite. Before you “probe”, ask permission.
- Be humble. Arrogance or over-confidence will be off-putting.
- Be direct. Don’t accept glib answers or religious wording. Find out what people really mean and believe. Precision is critical because, in this game, close doesn’t count.
- Be patient. Don’t feel obliged to “unload the whole truck” at the first opportunity. Know when to back off.
- Do the work of an evangelist. Be ready “in season and out.”
- Be in God’s will.
- Pray without ceasing. Have the attitude of the person who said, “When I work, I work. When I pray, God works.”
- Pray for co-laborers in the fields that are “ripe unto harvest.”
- Pray for opportunities. “Here I am Lord, send me.”
- Pray for specific individuals. Be patient and faithful.
- Pray for the words to speak.
- Don’t cast your pearls before swine. Some folks simply are not ready to hear the message. With some folks you may have to “shake the dust off your feet,” although you can still pray.
- Trust God for the results. You may plant a seed or you may water it, but only God gives the increase.

Know God’s role

- It is the Spirit who convicts of sin, righteousness & judgment. Yet faith comes by hearing, and God may choose to honor us to lead another person to him.
- It is the Spirit who quickens and gives life. Whenever God has used you to share his word, it is never a failure, no matter the results seem like. He promises that his word will not return void.
- Salvation is by faith alone. It is not by a process, be it the four spiritual laws, the sinner’s prayer, a “sincere” repentance, etc.

- God is sovereign. You may sometimes feel like you've said the wrong thing or really messed up. But God is in control. He will use what you said or did anyway and bless you for obeying him.

Witnessing

Stay on message

- Preach "Christ crucified." You are not trying to prove the error of anyone's religion.
- Preach the good news—the gospel—"the power of God for salvation to everyone that believes." Preach why we need good news, that is, the bad news. We are sinners "condemned already."

Recognize the realities

- Honor God's truth. There is no other way to the Father but by Christ; there is no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved. Do not vacillate on this.
- Recognize the "offense of the cross." Some will stumble on the harsh reality of their sinfulness or God's anger and judgment. But don't deny it or whitewash it. Meet resistance by asking God to soften hearts.
- For the typical "party-line" Catholic to trust Christ alone, understand the turmoil and emotions they may likely go through. If what you are telling the person is true, it has a lot of implications for him, some truly terrifying. For example:
 - My parents, who raised me Catholic, and were well intended, must have misled me. They couldn't have made such a mistake; they were so sincere and devoted.
 - My parents, themselves, then, must not be true Christians.
 - If I converted away from Catholicism, it would kill my mother.
 - My extremely holy grandmother, God rest her soul, wouldn't be in heaven today.
 - All of my ancestors, then, must be in hell.
 - Would this mean that the dear nuns who taught me in school aren't saved?
 - What about my own children? I've baptized them in the Catholic Church. Did I raise them with the wrong faith? Will they go to hell because of me?
 - What will my spouse think?
 - What about my promise to raise my children as Catholics?
 - Would I have to quit my church? It's all I've ever known.
 - My whole identity has always been Catholic. My whole community is Catholic. I can't leave my culture.
- Given the above, be very gentle and be empathetic. Appreciate the raw emotions that a Catholic may go through processing this new data.
 - Someone has said it will be like you are performing open-heart surgery on the person, without the use of an anesthetic.
- Explain the complete gospel. It is not fire insurance. It is not cheap grace. Although it is a free gift, it will change one's life. Repentance is a 180-degree turnaround; it's not self-help, a process of improvement, or a turning over of a new leaf. Christ's followers are told to deny themselves, and take up their cross. Christ cautions us to count the cost. Do not ask for a quick decision based on insufficient data or an incomplete understanding of the gospel.
- When you feel led by God's Spirit, press for a decision. When one clearly is under conviction, and understands God's provision, ask them directly to "choose you this day whom you will serve."

Follow Up

Challenges for the new believer

- New Christians can expect difficulties very early on. Satan will try to prevent their growth. Old habits may be hard to break. They may not know how to handle sin, temptation and defeat. They may have friends or relatives that fight them or disown them because of this. They may be clueless about the building of spiritual disciplines. They may have to think about their relationship to their church, whether they should leave, etc.
- The four types of soil Christ described indicate the ways people may receive the gospel. Your preparation with them ahead of time, cultivating the soil, and your nurturing of them after they trust Christ, may help them “be” good soil.
- You must be especially supportive at this time. And, it is likely that it will involve your personal attention as the one who led them to the Lord; it’s likely to be ineffective to simply direct them to a good church.

Making disciples

- The Great Commission tells us not only to preach the gospel but also to make disciples. Evangelism doesn’t end when souls get saved. Disciple making takes time; for example, Jesus spent 3 years training his. After the Lord has graciously used you to bear spiritual children, you have to play the parent. Your time may have to be balanced between ongoing evangelism and ongoing discipleship. But God may deign to use others, recognizing we all have differing gifts.
- Take care to recognize that God is their true Father. While you may disciple or shepherd them, only God knows what he wants that person to become, and in what priority or sequence. You need to ascertain God’s leading in your disciple making so you work with God and not go off on your own. We all have our peccadilloes and can easily try to make the other person little versions of ourselves. For example, we may think that they should stop smoking and begin work on that immediately, when that may not be in God’s plan for some time. Romans 14 reminds us that each of us stands before God as individuals.

6. Tips & Techniques

Analogies

What's in the Glass?

- Situation: You are given a glass that appears to be filled with juice. The person giving you the glass says “Drink it. There’s juice in the glass.” Before you do, however, you might ask some questions, such as:
 - Is there anything else in the glass but the juice?
 - Where did you get this juice? What’s its source?
 - What do you mean by “juice”?
- Analogy: Protestants talking to Catholics or visiting their churches sometimes are surprised to hear things they agree with. The problem is not in the similarities, but in the differences. Because the Catholic Church considers Sacred Tradition and its magisterium as authorities equal to Scripture
 - the content of its theology is different
 - the source of its teaching is different, and
 - the definition of many common terms are different.

An Analogy on Faith Alone: The Towering Inferno

- Situation: You are trapped on the 6th floor of a high-rise that is on fire. You observe some of your co-workers jump, safely land in the waiting firemen’s nets, and walk away unharmed. You’re fearful to jump, naturally, yet you know to remain in your current situation is certain death.
- Mental assent versus trust
 - If asked, you might say “I believe the firemen will save me if I jump.” But, you cannot say you really trust them—not until you actually jump. Until you jump, you may given mental assent to the facts, but until you actually act on your belief, you really haven’t trusted them.
- True faith is risky
 - If you’re wrong, you will be disappointed.
- Hedging your bets
 - You may decide to jump, but hang onto the curtains or the window ledge. This will not save you, because you needed to trust in the firemen only.
- Trusting Christ alone
 - To trust Christ to save you is like jumping out of the building without clinging to anything else. If Christ alone isn’t enough, then frankly, you will spend eternity in hell.
- Gal 5:1-5. These verses tell us that, even if we believe in Jesus, if we are also trying to keep the law, then Christ is of no effect to us. We will be under obligation to keep the whole law. We will either be saved by ourselves or by Christ alone—but absolutely not by joint effort.

The Fly & The Ox

- There's an old saying that goes like this: "And so we plow along," said the fly to the ox.
 - Clearly, the fly is not really contributing anything at all to getting the field plowed. Yet, because of its perceived connection to the ox, it somehow thinks it is.
 - Clearly, the ox has a right to be annoyed at the fly's assertion.
 - If at the end of the day, the farmer thanked (or paid) the fly just as much as the ox, something would be truly amiss.
- Application
 - The wages of our sin is death; God is a God of justice and the debt will be paid. And, whoever pays that debt will be greatly honored. To believe that we cooperate with the grace of God to merit our forgiveness is to be the fly on the ox. God emphatically states that he will not share his glory with another. He will not let the fly get the credit that only he deserves. It is an insult to the greatest act of God on our behalf, and it will not be tolerated. Galatians 5 teaches that our faith in Christ becomes worthless if we also try to earn our salvation.

The Ant & The Elephant

- Similar to the Fly & the Ox
 - After the ant rode on the elephant's back across the bridge, he said:
 - "Wow, did we ever make that bridge shake!"

Free Donuts in the Cafeteria!

- Sometimes folks arguing against "faith alone" may say that having faith itself is a work. You could use this analogy: "Let's say I notice that someone has brought donuts in to work. I go back to my desk and announce to my co-workers that there are free donuts in the cafeteria. Everyone dashes over there, but one guy comes back and says, 'Those donuts weren't free. I had to walk over there and pick one up before I could eat it. I earned that donut.'"
- Wouldn't you think this guy's logic was a little faulty?

Tips & Techniques

The Difference Diagram

- In overlapping circles, describe the basic areas of agreement and disagreement between Catholicism and (generic) Protestantism. Focus on the main point of difference—the gospel. Use simple terminology. Be matter-of-fact rather than argumentative.

Good News – Bad News

- Ask the other person how they would describe the gospel, that is, what the "good news" is. After that, ask them why we even need good news, that is, what the bad news is. This should give you a pretty fair insight as to where they stand spiritually.
- A Typical Protestant Response (Good News)
 - Q. The word gospel means good news. What, exactly, is the Good News?
 - A. God transferred all of our sin on Christ, and credited all of Christ's righteousness to us. His death paid the entire penalty for our sins, so God can freely and totally forgive us. There is no condemnation or punishment left for us—nothing we have to do to earn his grace. (Grace cannot even be earned; it isn't grace if it isn't free.) God adopts us as children, treats us as friends, and we can be sure of our eternal destiny in God's presence. He gives his gifts, including his grace, without revoking them.

- A Typical Protestant Response (Bad News)
 - Q. Why do we even need good news? What is the Bad News?
 - A. Any sin we do, even the smallest, makes us deserving of eternal punishment. Jesus said anger is a sin against God as well as murder; lust as well as adultery. James said if we break one law, we are guilty of all. Isaiah said all our righteousness is worthless to God. And, Paul says everyone of us are sinners, not one of us seeks after God, and that no one will be justified in his sight by works of righteousness. In fact, if we try to earn God's grace, it proves we haven't yet received it.
- A Typical, Catholic Party-Line Response (Good News)
 - Q. The word gospel means good news. What, exactly, is the Good News?
 - A. Christ died for our sins.
 - Q. Why is that good news?
 - A. It provides us the opportunity to earn our place in heaven.
 - Q. Does the good news include being sure that you're going to heaven...that you're saved?
 - A. No, we can never be sure. We are not saved in the past tense, but we're in the process of being saved.
- A Typical, Catholic Party-Line Response (Bad News)
 - Q. Why do we even need good news? What is the Bad News?
 - A. Because we're sinners.
 - Q. Why is that bad news?
 - A. When we do mortal sins, it kills the grace in our souls.
 - Q. And that means what?
 - A. It means that now we would be headed for hell unless we make a valid confession to a duly-authorized priest and we do the assigned penance.

F-O-R-M-A-T

- To guide a general discussion into an evangelistic one, especially for folks you do not know very well, you can use this "format":
 - F—Family. Tell me about your family...
 - O—Occupation. What kind of work do you do?
 - R—Religion. Do you attend any church around here?
 - M—Message. May I share with you what I believe about religion/God?
 - A—Ask for a decision. (or A—Accept where they are; they may not wish to discuss it further at this time...)
 - T—Thank God. If they've trusted Christ, thank God together in prayer. No matter what, thank God for the privilege of witnessing. (or T—Trust God. Trust God for the results, and for further opportunities).

Just in Case / It Can't Hurt

- You can ask this kind of question to probe what a person is really trusting in: "Okay, you say you're trusting in Jesus to save you. Is there anything else you do, just in case it might also help?"
- While you ask probing questions, if the person acknowledges that they do something with the feeling that "it can't hurt my chances of being saved," then latch onto that. It tells you that they do not yet fully understand what trusting in Christ alone means.

Do(ne)

- Bill Hybels tells the story how he had just a minute to summarize his beliefs. He basically said he believed all world religions spell their message D-O. This is what you should “do.” But Christianity spells it D-O-N-E. It’s not what you Do, but what Christ has already Done.
- A refinement. Technically, not all of “Christianity” spells it D-O-N-E. In fact, most people who call themselves Christian are following some version of a works-based religion.

Have you ever come to a point in your life...?

- Some folks are comfortable with a very direct approach, such as using the clichéd “If you died tonight, and God asked you why he should let you into heaven, what would you say?” A variation of that approach that seems a little less harsh could be: “Have you ever come to a point in your life where you could say you are certain about where you will spend eternity?” Either question should get the conversation flowing in the same general direction.

The Pocket Evangelism Kit

- This little kit is designed specifically for explaining your faith to Catholics. It is a very powerful technique for helping a person really see what they are trusting in.
 - Available from dkpresschristianbooks.com ▫ About \$3
 - Written by James G. McCarthy
 - Includes cards & instructions

A set of cards

- Each represents something a person might be trusting in for salvation



Use of the cards

- Read the instructions & prepare
- Explain that you'd like to get their opinion on what is absolutely necessary to get to heaven
- After laying down & explaining what each card means
 - Ask them—in their opinion—what is necessary to get into heaven
 - They will likely pick up multiple cards
 - Work with a few cards they picked up & use Scripture to refute the card
 - Hopefully, get them to ask “Then how can anyone get to heaven?”
 - Show them from the Scriptures

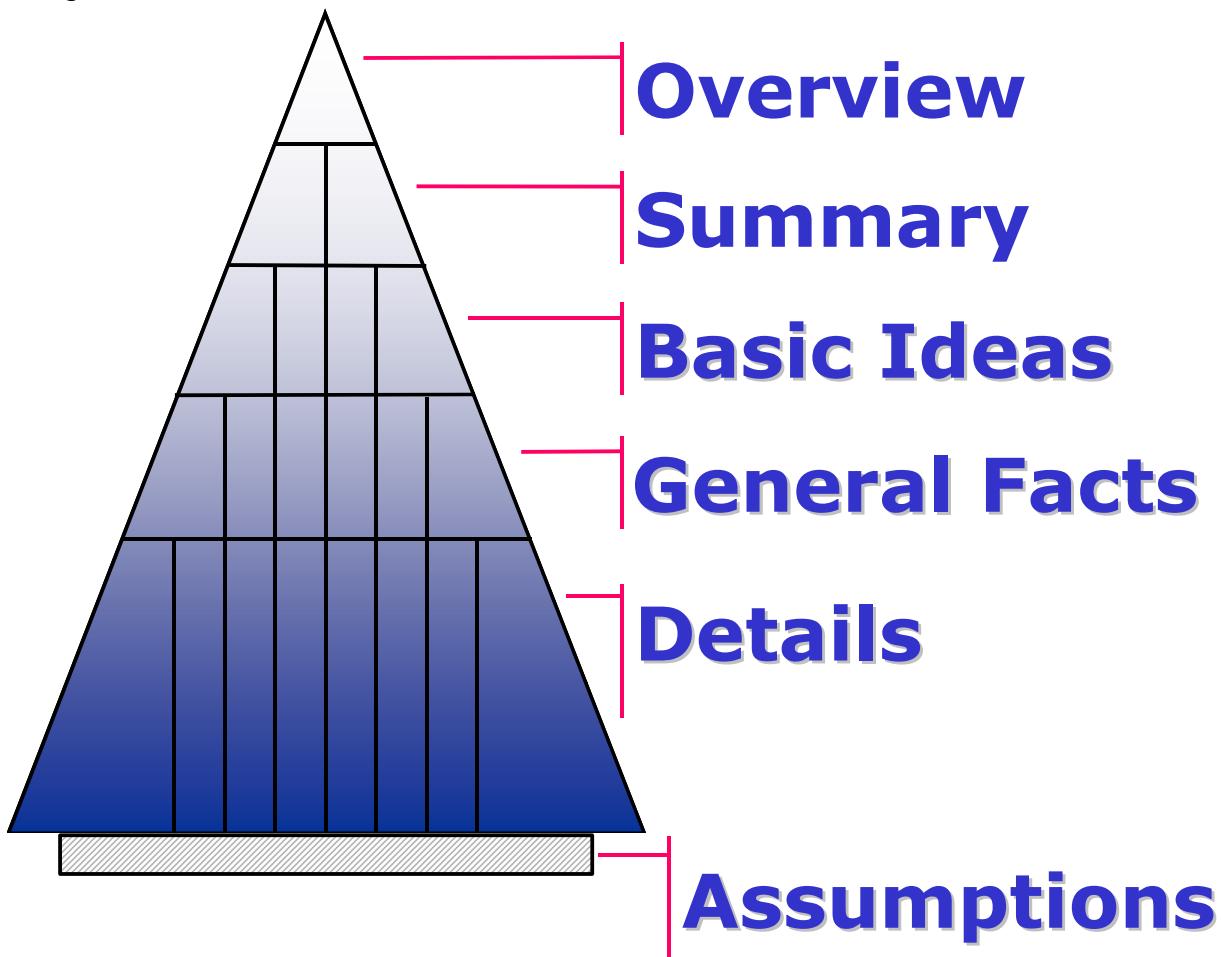
Diving Deeper

Advanced Topics

- There are many materials that Catholic/Protestant issues in more technical detail. One example that I highly recommend is “The Bible & Tradition in Roman Catholicism” by Dr. Sinclair Ferguson. It is available at mbrem.com/bible/traditn.htm.

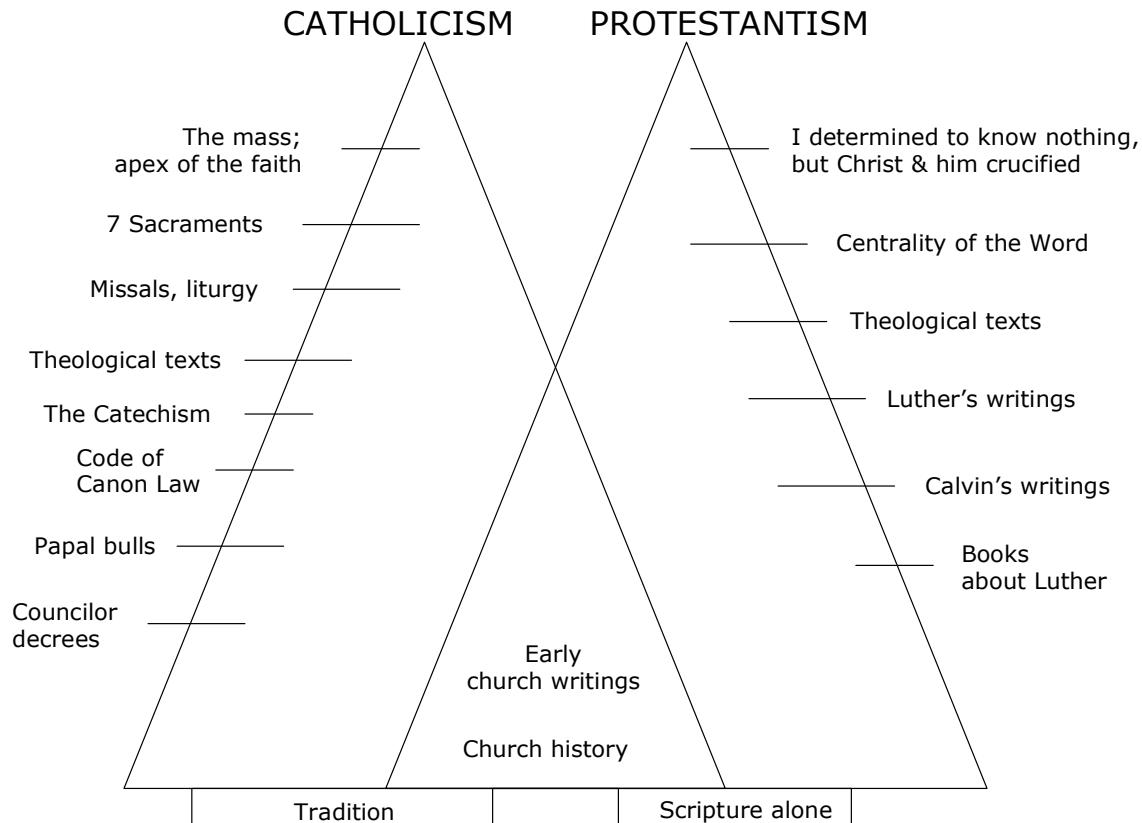
Bodies of Knowledge

- Any “body of knowledge,” or area of study, can generally be viewed in a hierarchical manner as depicted below. At the highest level, there are at most a few key points. With increasing depth, there is more that can be said or studied, until at the detail level, the quantity of data can be overwhelming. Yet, underneath it all, there are probably a limited set of assumptions, or pre-suppositions that form the foundation to the whole area.
- This picture can be likened to a building, where any fault at the lower level will weaken or destroy the higher levels. Hence, the assumptions are the most critical, and yet many times go unexamined.



The Catholic & Protestant Bodies of Knowledge

- As we've seen, there are commonalities and differences in the Catholic and Protestant theological systems. These could be shown as:



The examples illustrated above are only a few of the thousands that could be shown.

Implications for Explaining your Faith

- In this class, we've only scratched the surface of this topic. A knowledgeable Catholic could raise issues we haven't yet thought about. However, most laymen, Catholic or Protestant don't get very deep in these issues. Even a PH. D. and a lifetime of study would not exhaust what could be known in this area.
- A good understanding of Sola Scriptura and the reasons for it, can safeguard us from a lot of confusion, since most of what we don't agree with in RC theology has its roots in their Tradition.
- We ought to share our faith humbly, not arrogantly. No matter how much we study this topic, we remain amateurs. Yet, on the basis of God's Word, we have the right to stand steadfast in the truth.
- Don't lose sight of the forest for the trees. What we happen to know about the Roman Catholic faith ought to remain in our "back pockets," to be brought out only when we're questioned specifically about a given issue. An unsaved Catholic's problem is not the church they belong to, but that they do not know Jesus.
- The "front pocket" material is Christ and him crucified; your testimony; and the clear distinctive of "salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone."

Appendix: "What is an Evangelical?" by Michael Horton

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Labels are often confusing, especially when the jar's content changes. Grape juice can become vinegar over the years in the cellar, but the label doesn't change with the changes in the substance. The same is true of the term "evangelical."

Since "The Year of the Evangelical," corresponding to our nation's Bicentennial in 1976, the term (in North America, at least) has come to identify those who highlight a particular brand of politics, a moralistic and often legalistic approach to life, and a sort of ersatz, "corny" style of evangelism. For some, the term encompasses the emotionalism they see on religious TV. For others, hypocrisy and self-righteousness. Then there are the memories many of us have who were raised evangelical: strong, caring family environments; a sense of belonging, with friends who like to talk about the "things of the Lord."

Regardless of your background, it's important to understand the meaning of the term "evangelical."

People first began using that label in the sixteenth century, as a designation for those who embraced the gospel which had been, in a very real sense, recovered by the Protestant Reformation in that century. "Evangelical" comes from "evangel," which is Greek for "gospel." Thus, the "evangelicals" were the Lutherans and Calvinists who wanted to recover the gospel and shout it from the rooftops. It was a designation employed to set Protestants in sharp contrast to Roman Catholics and "sects." But to understand why these Protestants thought they were the ones who had really recovered the true, biblical gospel, we have to understand what that gospel was.

The "Evangel"

The Reformation was a collection of "solas"—that's Latin for "only." They cheered, "Sola Scriptura!", meaning, "Scripture only." The Bible was "the only rule for faith and practice" (Westminster) for the Reformers. You see, the Church believed that the Bible was fully inspired and infallible, but the Church was the only infallible interpreter of the Bible. The Reformers agreed that tradition was important and that Christians shouldn't interpret it by themselves, but that all Christians, whether clergy or laity, should come to a common understanding and interpretation of Scripture together. The Bible ought not to be left exclusively to the "experts," but that never meant for the Reformers that every Christian should presume that he or she could come to interpretations of the Bible without the guidance and assistance of the Church.

The main point of "sola Scriptura," then, was this: The Church should not be allowed to make up rules or doctrines outside of Scripture. There are no new revelations, no popes who hear directly from God, and nothing which the Bible doesn't address should be mandated for Christians.

The second "sola" was "Sola Christus," "Christ Only." This didn't mean that the Reformers didn't believe in the Trinity—that the Father and the Holy Spirit were equally divine, but that Christ, being the God-Man and our only Mediator, is the "front man" for the Trinity. "He who has seen Me has seen the Father," Jesus said. At a time when mere humans were

taking Christ's place as mediator between God and Christians, the Reformers shouted with St. Paul, "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). I grew up in churches where we had "altar calls" and this might be the closest things we modern Christians have to the medieval "altar call"—the Mass. In our churches, the pastor would act as a mediator, acknowledging our hand "while every head is bowed and every eye closed," and we would go up front to where he was, called the "altar" and repeat a prayer after him. He would then pronounce that, having "prayed the prayer," we were now saved. I remember getting "saved" again and again. When I felt guilty after a particularly nasty Saturday night, down I'd go again to the altar. Medieval Christians were scared to death that they might die with unconfessed sin and go to hell. So, the Mass was an opportunity to "get right with God" and fill up the bathtub that had gotten a leak due to sin.

But the Reformers would tell those of us who live in anxiety over whether we're in or out of God's favor, or whether we're surrendering enough or gaining victory, "Only Christ!" It was His life, not ours, which counts for our salvation; it was His sacrificial death and victorious resurrection which secures eternal life for us. Because He "surrendered all," His merit more than covers our demerits.

That brings us to the next "sola"—"Grace Only!" Rome believed in grace; in fact, the Church insisted that without it nobody could be saved. But grace was like a sort of "magic dust" that helped a person live a better life—with God's help. The Reformers countered that grace is not a substance that God gives us to live a better life, but an attitude God has toward us which accepts us as righteous because of Christ's holiness, not our own.

That's why they issued the fourth "only," which we know as "Faith Only!" Granted that we're saved by grace alone, how do we get this grace? Rome argued that grace was distributed by the Church through the various methods the "higher-ups" had invented. Faith plus love or faith plus good works, or something like that became the formula for salvation. The Reformers, to the contrary, insisted that from beginning to end, "salvation is the Lord's doing" (Jon.2:9). "The Spirit gives life; man contributes nothing" (Jn.6:55). "It does not depend on man's decision or effort, but on God's mercy" (Rom.9:16). So faith itself is a gift of God's grace and cannot be said to be the "one thing" we do in salvation: For we are "born not of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God" (Jn.1:13).

The minute a person looks to "Christ only" for salvation, depending on His holy life and substitutionary sacrifice on the cross, that very moment he or she is justified (set right, declared righteous, holy, perfect). Christ's own holiness is imputed (credited) to the believer's account as though he or she had lived a perfect life of obedience—even while that person still continues to fall into sin repeatedly throughout his or her life. The Christian is not someone who is looking in the spiritual mirror, gauging one's nearness to God by experience or progress in holiness, but is rather someone who is "looking to Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). In short, it's Christ's lifestyle, not yours, that meets God's requirements and that righteousness can be transferred to your account by faith (looking to Christ) alone.

Finally, the Reformers said that all of this means that God gets all the credit. "Soli Deo Gloria" was their way of putting it—our last "sola," which means, "To God Only Be Glory!" An evangelical, therefore, was God-centered; someone who was convinced that God had done it all and that there was nothing left for man to claim as his own except sin. This radically transformed not only the devotional life of believers who embraced it, but the

social fabric as well. In an old seventeenth century tavern in Heidelberg, Germany, there reads at the top, “Soli Deo Gloria!” J.S. Bach, the famous composer, signed all of his compositions with that Reformation slogan. Likewise, another composer, Handel, declared, “What a privilege to be a member of the evangelical church, to know your sins are forgiven. If we were to be left to ourselves, my God, what would become of us?” Great and noble lives require great and noble thoughts and the sovereignty and grace of God are, if anything, great and noble thoughts. The Reformers told Rome what J. B. Philipps, the English Bible translator, told the contemporary Church: “Your God Is Too Small.”

The Reformation, which produced the term “evangelical,” also recovered the biblical doctrine of “the priesthood of all believers” and the scriptural notions of calling and vocation. The Church had divided Christians into first-class (those who would enter “full-time Christian ministry”) and second-class (those who were employed in “secular” jobs). The Reformers countered that all Christians are priests and are, therefore, ministers of God regardless of whether they are sweeping a room to God’s glory, shaping a piece of pottery, defending a client in court, curing a patient, milking a cow, or leading a congregation in worship. There is no “secular” and “sacred”—God created the whole world and made life in that world inseparable from our very humanity.

How Do We Square Today?

The question, of course, is whether “evangelical” means today what it has meant for almost five hundred years.

First, many of today’s evangelicals have a lower view of Scripture than the Church of Rome had in the sixteenth century. Leading evangelical institutions doubt the Bible’s trustworthiness and infallibility—unless, of course, it happens to agree with what they’ve already decided to be true. Others believe the Bible is inerrant, but add new rules or revelations to the canon. “The Bible is enough,” the Reformers would counsel us. Sermons are very often “pop/inspirational” pep-talks on “How To Raise Positive Kids” or “How To Have Self-Esteem” rather than serious expositions of Scripture. According to Gallup, “America is a nation of biblical illiterates,” even though 60 million of them call themselves “evangelicals.”

Second, many evangelicals today do not believe that Christ is enough, either. Sometimes even very good and noble persons replace Christ as our only mediator, such as the Holy Spirit. While we worship the Spirit along with the Father and the Son, the Son has the unique role as our only Advocate and Mediator. We must not look to the Spirit’s work in our hearts, but to Christ’s work on the cross. Sometimes, we have human mediators other than the God-Man Christ. We need other go-betweens, like the role of the pastor in the “altar call” to which I referred. Not long ago I saw a leading televangelist pick up the receiver of his phone (a prop) and inform his viewers that, “This is your connection to God.” Evidently, I’m not alone—a secular band, “Depeche Mode,” sings of “Your Own Personal Jesus” who can be reached by picking up a phone and calling in your confession. As long as we’re on the subject, we might as well point out that it was John Tetzel’s selling of “indulgences” (time off in purgatory for sums of money) which inspired Luther’s “Ninety-Five Theses,” sparking the Reformation. “When the coin in the coffer rings,” the choir sang, “a soul from purgatory springs.” Is this really different from the selling of salvation we have seen on Christian TV, radio, and even in many churches? Money and salvation have become intertwined among many of us. “They sell you salvation,” sings Ray Stevens, “while they sing ‘Amazing Grace.’”

And as for “Grace Alone,” most evangelicals today believe that something—free will, a decision, a prayer, a walk down an aisle, a second blessing, something we do for God that will give us the confidence that we are in His favor. Doctrines like election, justification, and regeneration are hardly ever discussed because they paint the picture of a humanity that is helpless and that cannot even cooperate with God in the matter of salvation. If we are to be saved, it is God and God alone who must do it.

How about “Faith Alone”? Many evangelicals believe that faith isn’t enough. If one believes in Christ, but then goes out and blows it, is faith enough? If Christ comes back to find a believer in the arms of a prostitute, will He take that person home with Him? Some insist that faith plus surrender or faith plus obedience or faith plus a sincere desire to serve the Lord will serve as the formula. The fact that evangelicals struggle today with these questions indicates that we have not heard the “certain sound” of “faith alone” in our churches. Faith is enough because Christ is enough.

How do today’s evangelicals compare with their predecessors on the matter of “To God Only Be Glory”? Self-esteem, self-glorification, self-centeredness seems to dominate the preaching, teaching, and popular literature of the evangelical world. Today’s evangelicals know little of the great God of the Reformers—a God who “does as He pleases with the heavens and the peoples of the earth” and “who works everything after the plan and purpose of His own will” (Dan. 4; Eph. 1:11). Evangelicals today, reflecting their broader culture and society, are intimidated by a God who is God. But what other God can be trusted? In short, what other God exists? To worship the god of personal experience or the god of personal preference is to worship an idol. The Reformers took that seriously and those who would be “evangelicals” in more than name only must as well.

Conclusion

Many people wonder why “Reformation” folks appear angry. Nobody wants to be around angry people—and I certainly don’t want to be known as an “angry” person. But we must face the fact that these are especially unfaithful times for God’s people. We have been given a rich faith, with Christ at the center. But we have traded in our rich diet for a bag of popcorn and are malnourished to show for it. If evangelicals are going to have the same spiritual health which they have had in past ages, they will have to return to the truths which make “evangelicals” “evangelical.” The Bible—our only foundation; Christ—our only hope; Grace—our only gospel; Faith—our only instrument; God’s glory—our only goal; the priesthood of all believers—our only ministry. This original evangelicalism is still enough to make even our slightest gains enormous.

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