

In hindsight, I wish I could have taught the class slightly differently in a couple of ways:

1. In each class I covered a lot of material. Perhaps I could have included less, so that I was able to have more time for student questions, and listened more patiently when they were asked.
2. In each lesson, I would have liked to have stressed better the “so what?” To help remedy that, here is a short version of what I hope you would have taken away from each lesson.

Course Introduction

► Remember there are lost and saved people in every church, but sadly 85-95% of US Catholics believe what they are taught, that they need to earn their place in heaven by being good enough. And while God offers salvation freely to all, there are only a few who seek God; the others will face his judgment.

1. The Difference Diagram

► Remember the 2 key differences between our faiths are that: (1) we build our church on Scripture alone, not tradition, and as a result of that, (2) we believe we are made right with God **by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone**, not by following a set of rules defined by a church. While we share some things in common, these are not the things that save us—even demons know those basic things.

2. The Gospel According to Rome

► Remember that in Catholicism, to make it to heaven, one must obey the many rules of the church, die with no mortal sin that remains unconfessed to a Catholic priest, and then do penance for any remaining unconfessed venial sins by an indeterminate amount of time in purgatory. Catholicism has many dogmas (required beliefs) that have developed over centuries, and these are in continual change, such as the most recent beliefs that purgatory and hell are not real places—no one actually goes there.

3. The Gospel According to Scripture

► Remember that according to Ephesians 2:8-9 we are saved “by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.” Remember that Romans 4:5 and 11:6 teach that we are not saved by our works, and that according to 1 Timothy 2:5 there is only one mediator, meaning that we do not need priests, Mary, or the saints to stand between us and God. Salvation is a wonderful and amazing gift; many things happen at our conversion and many wonderful blessings accrue to us in our lives and afterlife.

4. An Infographic: The Catholic Church and its People

► Remember that Catholicism defines many words like *grace* in unbiblical ways, such as the idea that grace is *merited*. With the hierarchical and sacramental nature of the Catholic Church, you cannot get saved outside the church. Few Catholics come to appreciate the fact that the loving, triune God lives in true believers and is always immediately available to comfort and guide us. It’s a fine point, but important to note that Catholics technically do not *worship* Mary, but *venerate* her and the saints.

5. Student Questions/Catholic Tradition

► Remember that the Sacred Tradition of Catholicism is not based on Scripture, but in fact, takes precedence over Scripture and often contradicts it. Even the early church fathers were not inerrant in their teaching as witnessed by the corrections to the early churches given in Revelation 2 and 3.

6. Church History & Current Events

► Remember that the church in the early centuries didn’t look at all like the Roman Catholic Church does today, with a single pope, and its many dogmas that have accumulated over the years. Remember that even though they were dominated by larger churches there always were churches that were biblical in every age. The Reformation was triggered by more accurate biblical translations, recognition of theological errors, and widespread corruption. Catholic theology continues to change, e.g. in 1950 the Assumption of Mary was declared dogma and lately the belief in universal salvation is taking root.

7. Maximum Effectiveness in Witnessing

► Be sure you understand the gospel clearly and are growing in your faith so that you reflect Jesus. Make yourself available to God and ask him to bring people into your life who need him. As you witness, listen carefully! Ask others to define their terms. Probe to see if they have faith alone in Christ alone. Be gracious and let the Spirit lead you. Prepare your testimony to be appealing to lost people.

8. Interacting with Protestants

► If you're talking to someone with a religious background, do a bit of research on how their religion may impact their view of God and salvation. And don't be confused by evangelicals in error, whether they are charismatic, or they teach Lordship-Salvation theology. Stick to the main issue of salvation.

9. Sample Conversations with Catholics

► Think about how you witness to others, and consider new ways that might be more effective.

◀63▶ Apologetics

The style of evangelism that Ray Comfort uses, as described at *LivingWaters.com*, seems to have little need for knowing a lot of apologetic material (how to answer evolution, why evil exists, miracles or errors in the Bible, etc.). He implies that we can waste a lot of time trying to answer intellectual questions when the reality is that for most people the objections are something else, like not wanting to recognize or give up their sin.

The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). If we stick to the basics of the gospel message—that people are lost in sin and condemned already—we will be working with the Spirit. Once we sense a person is under conviction, then it's the right time to talk about God's marvelous solution.

I think this approach can make witnessing less threatening because there are a lot fewer 'answers' we have to know. I believe that everything that you or I know about Catholicism is "back-pocket" material, not even brought up in a conversation unless it must be. That knowledge, though, should motivate us to witness more, and help us be more confident and credible. [There is some information on apologetics in Appendix 8.]

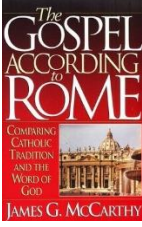
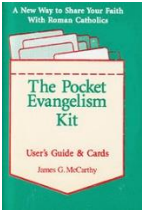
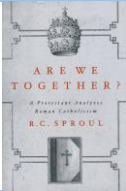
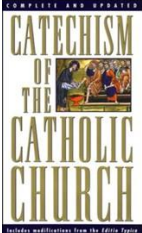

◀64▶ Appendices

These appendices provide richer details than we were able to cover in class. By themselves, they could make up an advanced level of the class, but I think they are readable on their own.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Why We Believe What We Do Believe | <u>page 101</u> |
| ► A brief summary of the Protestant Reformation and its "5 Solas" | |
| 2. Recommended Resources | <u>125</u> |
| ► Great resources (many free) with convenient links | |
| 3. Student Questions | <u>129</u> |
| ► Answers to questions that were not answered in class | |
| 4. Do Protestants & Catholics Worship the Same God? | <u>149</u> |
| ► Listed are 22 reasons why the answer is no, not even close | |
| 5. "Is the Pope Catholic?" is Now a Serious Question | <u>161</u> |
| ► Recent reactions to the current trends in modern Catholicism | |
| 6. What is Catholic Tradition? | <u>167</u> |
| ► More detail on what Sacred Tradition is and how it is developed | |
| 7. The Catholic Catechism | <u>175</u> |
| ► Examples of some of the teaching from the official Catechism | |
| 8. Conversations with Catholics | <u>179</u> |
| ► Sample dialogs that may give you ideas on how to talk with various types of Catholics | |

◀Appendix 2: Recommended Resources▶

◀71▶ Purchasable Materials

| Image | Resource | Price* |
|---|---|---|
|  | The Gospel According to Rome: Comparing Catholic Tradition and The Word of God By: James G. McCarthy | At cbd.com : • \$13 (text) • \$10 (eBook) |
| Note: There is an audio recording of McCarthy, where he gives his testimony and some background on the GATR book here | | |
|  | The Pocket Evangelism Kit: User's Guide & Cards by James G. McCarthy Brief Overview: reachingcatholics.org/way_of.html | (Help me find where to buy this. May be out of print.) |
|  | <i>Are We Together?: A Protestant Analyzes Roman Catholicism (Is the Reformation Still Relevant?)</i> , by R.C. Sproul Read at least Amazon's <i>Look inside</i> preview of the book here . | At cbd.cm : • \$13 (text) |
| —CATHOLIC MATERIALS BELOW— | | |
|  | Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994, paperback, 825 pages) | At cbd.com : • \$8.50 (text) • \$6 (eBook) |
| Note: The complete Catechism is also online (free) at CatechismOnline.com Or downloadable (free) as a PDF here | | |
|  | New American Bible St. Joseph Medium-Size Edition (Catholic Book Publishing Company, New York) | At cbd.com : • \$9 (text) • \$6 (eBook) |

| Source | Resource | Price |
|----------------------|---|---------------------|
| Living Waters | 128-page pdf “ God Has a Wonderful Plan for Your Life: The Myth of the Modern Message ” by Ray Comfort freewonderfulbook.com | Free |
| PDFs on Evangelism | Here | Free |
| Online Documentaries | American Gospel Film series (see below) | Free and \$5 Rental |

[From the Film Series] WHAT IS AMERICAN GOSPEL? ([link](#))

We believe American culture’s influence on the gospel is a problem, so an “American Gospel” is a distorted, corrupted gospel. That distortion happens when you add to the gospel (promises of “the American dream” of health, wealth, & prosperity), or when you subtract from the gospel (due to the influence of postmodernism, relativism, religious pluralism, etc.).

AMERICAN GOSPEL: CHRIST ALONE (2018) ([link](#))

Does Christianity = Christ + the American dream? American Gospel examines how the prosperity gospel (the Word of Faith movement) has distorted the gospel message, and how this theology is being exported abroad. This 2-hour, 20-minute film is the first in a series. ► **The first 40 minutes is free to watch and excellent.**

AMERICAN GOSPEL: CHRIST CRUCIFIED (2020) ([link](#))

The gospel message of “Christ crucified” has always been offensive. In our culture it is common for preachers to soften the offense of the cross, and the attributes of God that are displayed in the person of work of Jesus Christ. “American Gospel: Christ Crucified” explores how the paths of post-modernism and progressive Christianity lead to a different gospel, and a god created in our own image.

AMERICAN GOSPEL: SPIRIT & FIRE (2022, COMING SOON)

“American Gospel: Spirit & Fire” will examine the true person and work of the Holy Spirit, including His work in the life of Christ and His followers, and contrast this with the different spirit commonly promoted in the movement known as the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR).

Related Videos

- The Story behind the “American Gospel” Films ([link](#))
- Word of Faith Exposed, with Costi Hinn ([link](#))
- Bill Johnson & Bethel Examined Biblically ([link](#))
[► Note: I don’t agree with all of this video]
- Hillsong Hell ([link](#))
- Should your Church Play Bethel and Hillsong Music? ([link 1](#), [link 2](#)) [► These videos may only make sense after watching some of the other documentaries on this page]

The points made in these films are still very relevant, as shown by the Fall 2021 Issue of Illinois Family Institute’s Newsletter:

“The American Worldview Inventory 2021...[and George Barna]... studied the most prevalent seductive unbiblical ideas embraced by American adults.

Only 6% still embrace a biblical worldview.

Among that 6%:

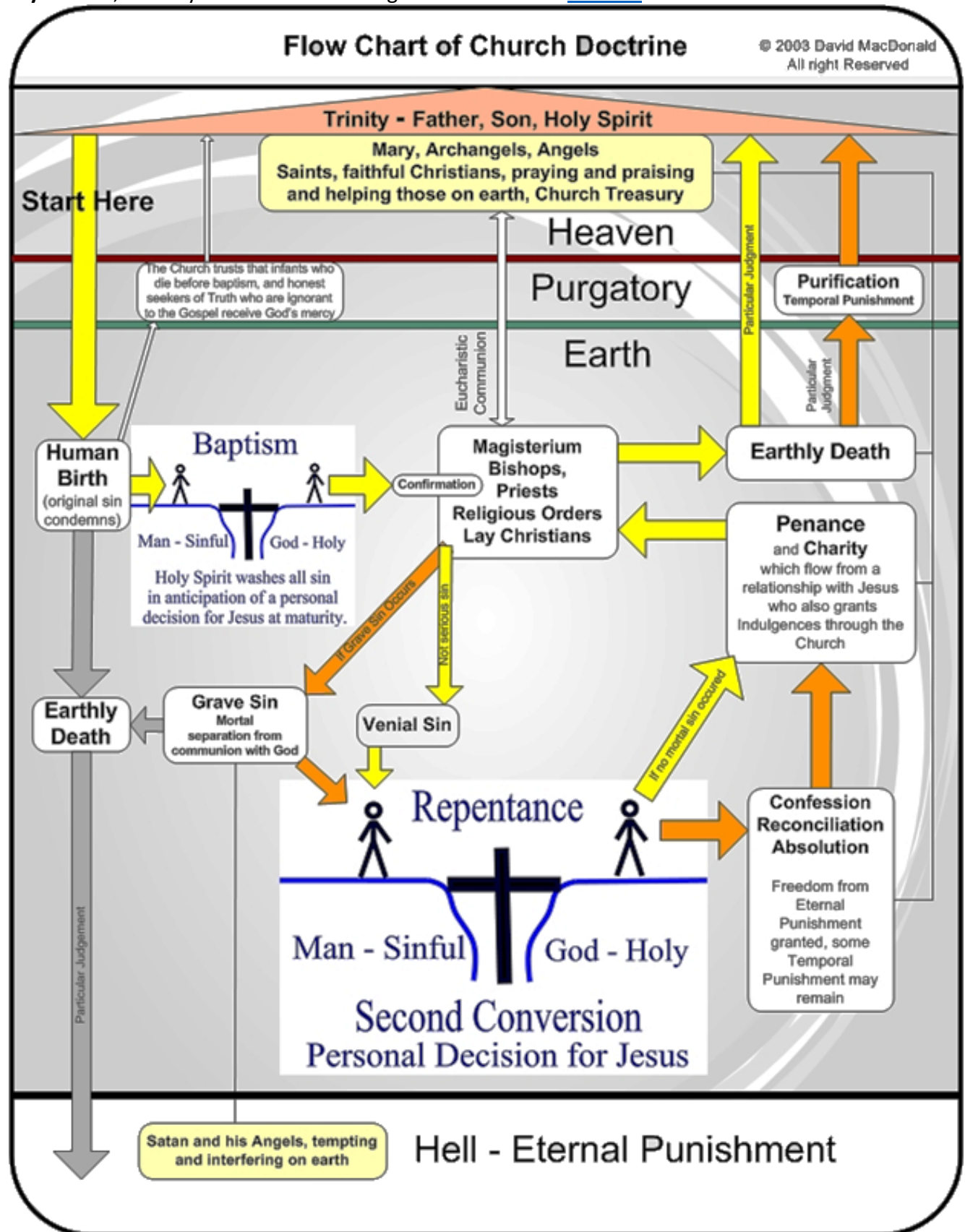
- 42% accept the idea that having some type of faith matters more than which one
- 33% embrace the idea of *karma*
- 14% believe there is no absolute truth
- 52% believe most human beings are basically good

Of 'born-again' people:

- 43% see premarital sex as morally acceptable
- 44% do not believe that people are born into sin
- 69% believe that most people are basically good

Q. Would a Roman Catholic agree with the *Gospel According to Rome* diagram?

My A. Well, actually I found a similar diagram on a Catholic [website](#) that looks similar to it:



D's Q: Everyone thinks their own faith is the one correct one; how do we explain why we think so? How does Biblical Christianity differ from the other major world religions?

A: Every religion is different. But Biblical Christianity (Protestantism) is different **in a unique way**, because only Biblical Christianity has the following:

- A living founder who was validated by:
 - Numerous predictions prior to his birth
 - A sinless life
 - Performing miracles
 - Being raised to life after death
 - Ascending to heaven, as seen by many eyewitnesses.
- Salvation by grace:
 - Not by works
 - Not by being treated as our sins deserve.
- An inspired sacred text validated by hundreds of literally fulfilled prophecies.
- Believers who are indwelt by God himself:
 - A God who loves us like a father and who welcomes us to his throne of grace
 - Freed from sin's guilt to live a new life
 - Freed from sin's grip and empowered to live righteously
 - Motivated to love God and others out a grateful heart.
- A glorious history:
 - Equality, dignity, and love given to all others, despite gender, race, class, or heritage
 - A belief in human freedom and democratic principles
 - A world-affirming, scientific approach to the world, combined with a dedication to work and progress resulting in the greatest accomplishments and governments in history.

J's Q: How can GBC people explain what religion they are, in terms that people can understand?

A: A simple answer might be something like this:

I attend what's known as a Bible church. There are hundreds of Bible churches in the US but we each operate independently. We are similar to a Baptist church. But while many Baptist churches elect to join denominational bodies like the Southern Baptist Convention, we generally prefer to stand on our own. We call ourselves a Bible church because we base everything we believe and do on the Bible alone, rather than also on tradition like the Catholic and Orthodox churches do. As a result we end up with a completely different belief on how a person gets right with God, for example.

Note that the above answer ends in such a way that it subtly invites a follow-up response.

This question reminds me of another question that I was once asked, "How would you describe GBC, and its place in today's religious landscape?" It had a much longer answer, but FYI, here's what I wrote...

Description of Grace Bible Church

Following is my description of GBC, in increasingly narrow adjectives: Christian > Protestant > Evangelical > Fundamentalist (to a degree) > Bible Church > Contemporary/Conservative > Grateful.

We are a [Christian Church](#)

We are a group of people that is fully committed to the teachings of Jesus, especially as taught by his original apostles (Acts 2:42, Ephesians 2:20). We are “called out ones” that serve as the “body of Christ.” We are “in this world, but not of it.” We are called to be salt and light, yet our citizenship is in heaven.

Although it was likely developed after the time of the apostles, we believe the “Apostle’s Creed” fairly encapsulates the basic teachings of Christianity.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

We are a [Protestant Church](#)

Many changes emerged out of the 16th-century Protestant Reformation, including a recovery of what we believe are these biblically based principles:

The priesthood of all believers

Separation of church and state

Freedom of conscience in religious beliefs

Personal Bible reading, study, and interpretation guided by the Holy Spirit

Congregational singing, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving

The righteousness of Christ appropriated to us through faith in him, making unnecessary the “conveying of grace” through priest-oriented sacraments

Recognition of only 2 valid ordinances:

- Believers’ baptism to symbolize one’s conversion through faith
- Communion, as a symbolic act, memorializing Christ’s death, resurrection, and promise to return and take us to himself

An emphasis on discipleship, so that we obey and apply God’s Word, not merely hear it. This leads to constant gratefulness and humility, ongoing spiritual growth, serving of fellow believers by using one’s spiritual gifts, and a strong work ethic.

Rightly administered church offices and church discipline

We also hold to the key theological truths stemming from the Reformation, often formulated as the “Five Solas”:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| “Scripture alone” (<i>Sola Scriptura</i>) | The written Scriptures are our sole source of authority for life and faith. No human being or church can add to his Word. | 2 Timothy 3:15; Deuteronomy 4:2 |
| “Faith alone” (<i>Sola Fide</i>) | We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We were dead but made alive. We are <u>declared</u> righteous, not <u>made</u> righteous. | Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:5; Titus 3:5; Philippians 3:9 |
| “Grace alone” (<i>Sola Gratia</i>) | Salvation is a “free gift;” it is not something we earn. We can be certain of our salvation. | Romans 6:23, 11:6; 1 John 5:13 |
| “Christ alone” (<i>Solo Christo</i>) | Jesus is our great high priest, the sole mediator between God and man. We are justified by his righteousness alone, not ours or anyone else’s | 1 Timothy 2:5; Philippians 3:9; Hebrews 10:10-12 |
| “To the glory of God alone” (<i>Soli Deo Gloria</i>) | No matter what profession we are in, and no matter what we do, we live before the face of God and solely for his glory. | 1 Corinthians 10:31; Isaiah 42:8; Romans 14:4 |

For more on this, we would agree with the statement on “Mere Protestantism” available at reformingcatholicconfession.com.

We are an [Evangelical Church](#)

We consider ourselves to be evangelicals. Some analysts have categorized our top identifying characteristics as follows:

We point to a specific, personal conversion experience in which we are “born again” or “saved” (see more [here](#)). Individuals (above an age of accountability) must personally trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.

We believe in the Bible as God’s inspired Word to humankind, perfect in truth in the original text. It is the final authority in all matters of doctrine and faith — above all human authority.

We believe the work of Jesus on the cross, through his death and resurrection, is the only source of salvation and forgiveness of sins. We make it clear that salvation is through faith alone. We can do nothing to earn our way to heaven. Instead, we do good works in grateful response to our pardon, not to cause it.

We are strongly motivated to share the gospel either one-on-one or through organized missions. Emphasis is placed on the Great Commission’s call to share with the world the Christian message of salvation, and to be publicly baptized as a confession of faith, typically by immersion.

Most of us, though not all, believe there will be a rapture in the end times where the church will be caught up with Christ before the Great Tribulation, leaving nonbelievers behind to suffer on Earth.

We are a Fundamentalist Church

While some early fundamentalists tended to be harsh and judgmental, **which we strongly disavow**, we do agree with the original points that they made.

| | |
|---|--|
| The inspiration, inerrancy, and literal interpretation of the Bible (For more on this, we agree with the <i>Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy</i> , written in 1978, here) | 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:25; John 16:13 |
| The virgin birth of Christ | Isaiah 7:14-16; Luke 1:27-32 |
| The deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit | John 10:30; John 15:26 |
| The historical reality of Christ's miracles and the Creation account in Genesis | John 2:23; John 3:2; John 11:46-47; Acts 2:22; Mark 10:6 |
| The belief that Christ died on the cross to pay for the sins of the world and rose from the dead | Luke 18:31; Luke 24:7; Acts 10:38-40; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 |
| The future, physical return of Christ | John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Rev 22:20 |

We are a Bible Church

As is common in Bible Churches, we hold to:

- Being self-ruled as an autonomous church, i.e. not a part of any larger organizational body
- Being governed by a board of elders, elected by the congregation, rather than the congregation ruling itself, or by a single pastor/bishop governing the body
- Biblically based preaching
- Although we may not all agree on every particular detail, we generally hold to a systematic theology of Dispensationalism. In short, this would include these ideas:
 - Throughout history, God has operated in different ways toward mankind.
 - How he operated toward Israel is different than how he operates now toward the church.
 - Promises given to Israel will be fulfilled in the future, e.g. possession of the Promised Land.
 - There will be a glorious Millennium on the Earth, an actual 1000-year reign of Christ.
 - There will be a Tribulation on the Earth, a seven-year outpouring of God's wrath.
 - The Tribulation will precede the Millennium (a belief called *pre-millennialism*, or *pre-mil*).
 - The next prophetic event is the "Rapture." It is imminent, i.e. it could happen at any time.
 - The Rapture will precede the Tribulation (a belief called *pre-trib*).

We are a Contemporary, Conservative Church

We are a church that will always seek ways to present the gospel and do ministry more effectively in the communities of which we are a part. We hold our traditions lightly, and we courageously address the pressing matters of the day. Regarding some of the controversial beliefs on which some evangelicals have different views than us, we hold these positions:

A cessationist view of the miraculous/apostolic spiritual gifts. In short, while we recognize our constant dependence on the Holy Spirit, we are not a charismatic church. We believe one is filled with the Spirit at the moment of their new birth, not as a second work of grace.

The roles of Pastor and Elders reserved for men. While not discounting the valuable gifts and contributions women make to the church, we interpret the Scripture to restrict the pastoral roles in the church to men alone.

Sexual intimacy reserved for life-long marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that Scripture teaches that sexual intimacy is to be enjoyed solely in the context of a monogamous marriage. And partners are to remain faithful—God hates divorce, which is not to be sought as a solution to marital difficulties. We believe that children are a wonderful blessing from God, yet we

see no Biblical injunction against family planning.

We are sympathetic to those who experience same-sex attraction, but we believe homosexual behavior is strongly condemned in the Bible, and like any other sin, ought to be confessed and resisted. We love and accept those who are striving to resist temptation in this area in the same way we will love and accept everyone else in our church, because we are all striving to resist our own sinful tendencies.

Traditional binary genders of male and female. Scripture teaches that God made us male and female (Genesis 1:27, 5:2; Matthew 19:4). While we sympathize with those who struggle with their gender, we believe that it is not something that is “assigned” at birth, but is innate (chromosomally XX or XY)—it is a part of every cell of the body and inherently unchangeable. It is our duty as Christians to love everyone, and to seek justice, and we will do that wholeheartedly, but it is also our duty to proclaim the Word of God as is it written. (For more on this, we agree with the *Nashville Statement*, available at cbmw.org/nashville-statement.)

Complementarianism in the roles of marriage. We believe that Scripture teaches that husbands and wives have complementary roles in marriage—equally important but different. The man is called to be the leader of the home but has the awesome charge to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave his life for her. He is not to be domineering or abusive. The wife is to be submissive and supportive, a critically important role. While the husband makes the final decision, he is also the one who is ultimately responsible. We do not see submission in a negative sense, but rather as a positive reflection of how God is the head of Christ (1 Cor. 11:3).

We are a Grateful Church

Over the decades, we have seen God’s hand of blessing in many ways. We are grateful for that, and we earnestly pray for his continued blessing. May this be spoken of Grace Bible Church:

“As a result of your ministry, [people] will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!” Amen. (2 Corinthians 9:13-15, NLT)

◀Appendix 4: A Different God?▶

| Roman Catholic View | Protestant View |
|--|---|
| <u>God the Father</u> | |
| 1. requires me to pay for every last sin in a fiery purgatory for who knows how long | removes every sin as far as east is from west; lays them all on Christ and remembers them no more |
| 2. wants priests to serve as intermediaries | invites men to come boldly before the throne of grace |
| 3. wants Catholic priests to forgive sins | forgives sin; invites us to come to himself |
| 4. communicates truth through tradition | warned against the traditions of men in his written Word |
| 5. uses Mary to distribute grace to men | offers grace to all who turn to him |
| 6. can be judgmental and fearful to approach, needing Mary as the female face of God | is a loving father who shows compassion, and is slow to anger; runs to his prodigal son when he turns to God |
| 7. God's Word is for the church to interpret | God's Word is to bring life, to be studied and meditated on by all |
| <u>Jesus Christ</u> | |
| 8. perpetual victim | ever lives, a victor over the grave |
| 9. sacrificed on the altar at mass | said "It is finished." |
| 10. takes on the form of bread and wine | is seated at the right hand of the Father |
| 11. adored in the monstrance | affirmed the law, including not to bow down to any graven image or idol |
| 12. has a mother who is co-mediator | is the one mediator |
| 13. was the only child of Mary | had brothers and sisters |
| 14. needs the pope to be head of the church | is the head of the church |
| 15. needs Peter to be the rock | is the rock |
| 16. needs the super-abundant works of the saints to save people | death is sufficient |
| 17. needs to be eaten by one who wishes to have eternal life | needs to be believed in for eternal life |
| 18. needs the saints to listen to the prayers of people | said "come unto me" and taught us to pray to the Father directly: "Pray like this: Our Father..." |
| <u>The Holy Spirit</u> | |
| 19. inspires the Pope when he speaks ex cathedra | inspired the written Scriptures, including instructions not to add to the Word |
| 20. prompts men capable of responding spiritually in good works unto salvation | gives new life to people dead in their sin |
| 21. uses the sacraments to impart grace | indwells and empowers the believer to grow in Christlikeness |
| 22. convicts us of the sin of presumption if we claim to know we have eternal life | bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God |

See also [website 1](#) and [website 2](#).

◀Appendix 5: Is the Pope Catholic?▶

Leonardo De Chirico, in his video on current events in Roman Catholicism, makes these interesting points:

- The Roman Catholic Church is both Roman and Catholic. Sometimes it leans more toward the *Roman* side and emphasizes the unique traditions and practices that make it different from other religions. But at other times it acts more *Catholic*—or universal—and treats the whole world as a part of God’s family. Pope Francis clearly tends to the more Catholic side; hence the “Brothers All” encyclical, with its promotion of open borders and socialism.

The often-asked humorous question ‘*Is the Pope Catholic?*’ has now become a serious question. This Appendix looks at some of the criticisms about Pope Francis that people in the Catholic Church are making. To be more precise, the question they *should be asking* is “Is the Pope Roman Catholic”, because he certainly is leaning toward the Catholic side.

From en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis: “Pope Francis (born Jorge Mario Bergoglio, 1936) is the head of the Catholic Church and sovereign of the Vatican City State since 2013. Francis is the first pope to be a member of the Society of Jesus [Jesuits], the first from the Americas, and the first pope from outside Europe since Gregory III, a Syrian who reigned in the 8th century.



He maintains that the Church should be more open and welcoming for members of the LGBT community, and favors legal recognition of same-sex couples. Francis is an outspoken critic of unbridled capitalism and free market economics, consumerism, and overdevelopment, and advocates taking action on climate change.

He has faced criticism from theological conservatives on many questions, including his promotion of ecumenism, as well as admitting civilly divorced and remarried Catholics to communion with the publication of *Amoris Laetitia*.

Francis was mandated by his electing cardinals to sort out Vatican finances following scandals during the papacies of Pope Benedict and Pope John Paul II. He stated he is determined to end corruption in the Catholic Church but is not very optimistic due to a human problem dating back centuries.

Since 2016, criticism against Francis by theological conservatives has intensified. One commentator has described the conservative resistance against Francis as “unique in its visibility” in recent Church history. Some have explained the level of disagreement as due to his going beyond theoretical principles to pastoral discernment.

Francis has admitted that the Church “arrived late” in dealing with sexual abuse cases. In 2015, Francis was criticized for supporting Chilean bishop Juan Barros, who was accused of covering up sex crimes committed against minors. In 2018, Francis acknowledged he had made “grave errors” in judgment about Barros, apologized to the victims and launched a Vatican investigation that resulted in the resignation of Barros and two other Chilean bishops.

In 2018, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò published an open letter denouncing Francis's handling of sexual abuse allegations against Theodore McCarrick, accusing him of knowing about allegations that McCarrick had committed sexual abuse and failing to take action. Viganò called on the Pope to resign.

◀Appendix 7: The Roman Catholic Catechism▶

Catholicism's Method of Interpretation

Usually the Catholic Church interprets Scripture allegorically. But occasionally they will take an obvious figure of speech and interpret *it* literally. For example, Adam and Eve are not interpreted to be real people but are used in a fictitious story about the perpetual struggle between good and evil, and yet:

- “Eat my flesh, and drink my blood” is interpreted literally, even though in the same chapter (John 6) where Jesus says “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.” When he said that he did not become bread. And in 1 Corinthians 11, when he said “eat this bread and drink this cup” he was not speaking literally because the cup is a solid, not a liquid that one could drink.
- When Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:27 that “now you are Christ’s body,” it is another figure of speech that the Catholic Church chooses to interpret literally, apparently as a way to support an aspect of their Tradition. The Catechism’s striking paragraph 795 says,
 - “Let us rejoice then and give thanks that we have become not only Christians, but Christ himself. Do you understand and grasp, brethren, God's grace toward us? Marvel and rejoice: we have become Christ. For if he is the head, we are the members; he and we together are the whole man.” -- as if Christ needs us to be a whole man(??)

Contradictions and Confusion

Is the Mass Bloody or Unbloody? The Catechism refers to the “body and blood” of Jesus 29 times, including Paragraph 1376: “It by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change [is] called transubstantiation.”

Twice (1367 and 1369) the Catechism calls the Mass unbloody. “The same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner.”

Scripture says,

- “Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.” (Hebrews 9:22)
- “He said, ‘It is finished!’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” (John 19:30)
- “But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand.” Hebrews 10:12)

Victim? 1367 also says, “The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice: “The victim is one and the same: in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass.”

Scripture says Christ is anything but a victim, e.g.:

- “No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.” (John 10:18)
- “Don’t you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly?” (Matthew 26:53)

Roman Catholic Justification (from [website](#))

Roman Catholic teaching on justification places more emphasis on works, sacraments, and obeying the law than on personal faith. In fact, Catholics are condemned if they believe they are justified by faith alone. Canon 9 of the Council of Trent states: “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...let him be anathema.”

The Catholic Church teaches that the grace of justification comes, not through faith but through the sacraments, beginning with baptism. From paragraph 1992 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church we read: “Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy.”

Paragraph 2027 teaches Catholics that they can merit the unmerited favor of God: “Moved by the Holy Spirit, we can merit for ourselves and for others all the graces needed to attain eternal life.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church opposes God’s Word by teaching that justification:

- 1) is not by faith, but is obtained *without personal faith* through baptism (1992)
- 2) is not entirely the work of God, but a cooperative *work* between God and man (1993)
- 3) is not permanent, but can be lost by sin and regained through sacraments (1446)
- 4) is not different from sanctification, but includes it (2019)
- 5) is not a legal declaration by God, but *conforms us to* the righteousness of God (2020)

In conclusion, God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). No one can be saved by trying to merit God’s favor. His word reveals that we are justified by grace—the unmerited and undeserved gift of God (Rom. 3:24). This gift can only be received when one forsakes all efforts to save him- or herself and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). The grace that brings us salvation instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age (Titus 2:11-12). Thus, the life of a justified person produces evidence that reflects the divine nature that has been imparted. In this way God alone is worthy of all honor, glory, and praise.