

Drawing Aside the Purple Curtain

The Papal System Today: an Analysis of the News

The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation (Part Four)

The Reforming Catholic Confession: “Protestants” on the Way to Rome

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The Historic Protestant Institutions’ Protest against Rome is Over

The 31st October 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

On this day in 1517, an obscure German monk named Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the castle door in Wittenberg, Germany – and sparked a spiritual, political and social revolution which shook the world. Within weeks the theses had been widely circulated throughout the country and then throughout Europe. Prophesied of in Scripture (Rev. 10),¹ the Reformation was an event which literally altered the course of history and changed the world.

It is not surprising that its 500th anniversary would be observed by Protestant institutions the world over. But the tragedy is that what should be commemorated as the time when, in the Lord’s providence, a massive break was made with the diabolical Roman Papacy, is in fact being commemorated, by many of the historic Protestant institutions, as the time when that very break is being mended! When it should be being commemorated by reminding people of the false doctrines and abominable practices of the Papal system, of why the Reformation occurred, and of the great need to remain *forever separate* from that iniquitous, idolatrous and utterly antichristian religious system with its headquarters in Rome, many of the Protestant institutions are doing the very opposite. They are actually *lamenting* the break which occurred; calling it *a great tragedy*; wishing it had never happened; and doing all in their power to rush back under the wings of “Mother Rome” as fast as their spineless, biblically ignorant leaders will take them!

The remnant of the Lord’s people, true Bible-believing Christians who live “without [outside] the camp” of professing Christendom, whether Papist or false Protestant (Heb. 13:13), separate not only from the Mother Harlot of Rome but from her “daughter” harlots as well (Rev. 17:5), are witnesses to *the most momentous religious reversal in all history*: the headlong rush, by the “Protestant” institutions which came into being in the sixteenth century and afterwards, to now *apologise* to Rome for ever breaking away, and to grovel at the feet of the Roman Antichrist, while they cast off every doctrinal and practical barrier standing between them and full and abject surrender to the religious system over which he presides in all his haughtiness and arrogance.

It is true, of course, that many of the blessings which were the fruit of the Reformation are still with us today, to a greater or lesser extent, in various parts of the world. But inasmuch as it gave birth to religious institutions which came to be known as Protestant, and insofar as these once *protested* against Rome, *the Reformation is now over*. As far as the historic Protestant religious institutions are concerned – whether Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, Congregational, Methodist, etc. – *Rome has won*.

This series of articles is not about the historical events of the sixteenth-century Reformation as such. Innumerable pieces will be written about it for the 500th anniversary, and entire books as well. They

will focus on all the different facets of the mighty change which occurred in Europe five centuries ago. Certainly, the Reformation was one of the most important events in world history, and the more that it is known and understood, the better. This series, however, is not about the *beginning* of the Reformation, or its progress; it is about the *end* of the Reformation, as far as the protest against Rome by the historic, once-Protestant institutions is concerned.

Part One in this series is entitled *The Reformation's Accomplishments and Errors, and the End of Its Protest*. Part Two is entitled *Rome and the Lutheran Institution*. Part Three is entitled *Rome and the Reformed Institutions*. We suggest that these should be read before the present article, as it will place the latter in a proper context, providing the reader with much information, by way of introduction to the present article.

When the Papacy Itself is Commemorating the Reformation, then We Know the Reformation's Protest is Over!

The one religious institution which should want nothing whatsoever to do with Reformation commemorations and celebrations should be the Roman Catholic institution. After all, the Reformation struck the greatest blow to Papal power that it had ever experienced. The Papacy's vice-grip on Europe was broken in a number of countries. For the first time since the Papacy had assumed control of Europe centuries before, it experienced immense losses, politically and religiously.

No, the Roman Papacy should have no grounds for celebration in 2017.

And yet...

And yet, as unbelievable as it sounds, this very Roman Papacy, which condemned the Reformers as heretics, which has spent the past five centuries trying to destroy the "Protestant" institutions and stamp out Protestantism altogether – this very Roman Papacy *is* commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation alongside "Protestant" institutions!

Of course we know that its commemoration is designed solely to deceive. The Papacy is not *truly* commemorating it. But even so, it is astonishing that such a time has actually arrived, when the Roman Papacy could go through the motions of commemorating the Reformation, and the "Reformed" institutions could fall for it!

Who could ever have imagined that such a day would ever arrive? But it has. It beggars belief. Even Romanists are open-mouthed with astonishment at how times have changed.

What in the world is going on?

It would be more appropriate to ask: what, in the dark regions of hell, is going on? For *that* is where these astounding events were first planned, and what we are witnessing is simply the outworking, in history, of activity in Satan's underground.

The Reforming Catholic Confession: "Evangelical" Protestants Accept Papist Doctrine and Ecumenism

We have seen in the previous articles how the leaders of various unbiblical and unsound "Protestant" institutions were tripping over themselves, as the 500th anniversary approached, to embrace the Mother Whore of Rome with open arms. But what about other Protestants? After all, there are millions who are not part of the World Council of Churches, or of the Lutheran, Anglican, or various liberal Presbyterian, Congregational and other institutions calling themselves "churches". Would *they* all, at least, take a strong biblical stand against Romanism, and a strong biblical stand for biblical Protestantism, in this 500th anniversary year of the Reformation?

Alas, no.

In September 2017, just over a month before the official October 31st date of the anniversary, over 250 pastors, scholars, and other church leaders from around the world released a theological statement, called the *Reforming Catholic Confession*, supposedly affirming the essential teachings of the

Reformation and supposedly expressing the unity which exists among Protestants. As this statement was signed by many who would call themselves Evangelicals, people would assume that it would be a straightforward, strong defence of biblical Protestantism and repudiation of Roman Catholicism.

But it was not at all what it was cracked up to be.

As we have come to expect in these spiritually dark days, the statement was unbiblically ecumenical. True, it was not signed by Roman Catholics; but it was signed by many who are nothing but Protestants in name, and who in fact hold to serious doctrinal error. In fact, many of the initial signatories “either promote the [false] contemplative prayer movement (a movement that has its roots in Catholic mysticism and pantheism and is drawing Protestants in that direction) directly themselves or represent institutions or denominations that do. This promotion of contemplative spirituality includes the Confession’s co-chair, Dr. Timothy George... [who] expresses his admiration for Catholic practices such as the contemplative *Lectio Divina*.”²

One of the men behind the statement, Jerry Walls, an author and professor of philosophy at Houston Baptist University, said, for example: “It was just beautiful to see Pentecostals and Lutherans working together to find common language.”³ Pentecostals and Lutherans: two of the most unbiblical “Protestant” religious groups in the world. But they were there, signing the statement along with Reformed leaders, Wesleyan leaders, and various others. False ecumenism indeed!

Then came the following by Walls. Commenting on why the statement had been named the “Reforming Catholic Confession”, he said he felt it was important for Protestants to reclaim the word “catholic”. “The Church of Rome simply calls itself, ‘The Catholic Church,’” he said. “It is not *the* catholic church. It is one part of the holy catholic church.”⁴ By saying this, he was affirming that the Roman Catholic institution is a part of the true Christian Church! And at this point, any good he hoped to accomplish through this statement was utterly nullified. For Roman Catholicism is an entirely false religion – as false as Hinduism, Islam or Buddhism. It is not, and never has been, part of the true Christian Church. And, adding error to error, he went on: “We want to make it clear that ‘catholic’ is a much more expansive reality than the church of Rome.” But again, this is to make the false claim that the religion of Roman Catholicism is part of the true, universal Church of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit, in Rev. 17, calls the Papal institution “The Great Whore”. This man calls it part of the true Church. Is it the Bible which is in error, or is it Walls? The answer is obvious to any true Christian. A whore is not a virgin bride.

Further evidence about Walls’ utter lack of understanding of either Roman Catholicism or true Christianity is found in a just-published book which he co-authored with a fellow-Wesleyan, Ken Collins, entitled *Roman but Not Catholic: What Remains at Stake 500 Years After the Reformation*. Although the book sets out areas where Roman Catholicism and Protestantism differ, the following reveals all we need to know about the authors’ approach to Roman Catholicism: “Both in a recent phone interview... and throughout the book’s 410 pages, the co-authors repeatedly stress that they consider Roman Catholics their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and that their aim is not to widen the existing theological chasm.”⁵ The moment a so-called “Protestant” makes this shocking, unscriptural claim, he reveals his ignorance of the true nature of the false religion of Romanism – and even to some extent of true biblical Christianity! To claim that any Roman Catholic is a brother or sister in Christ, is to deny everything the Bible says about salvation by God’s grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. He might as well add that Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Seventh-day Adventists are brethren in Christ as well. For it is impossible to maintain that a Hindu is a member of a false religion, if one maintains that a Roman Catholic is not. And it is impossible to maintain that a Mormon is a cultist, if one maintains that a Roman Catholic is not.

Walls and Collins are adamant that they seek Roman Catholic-Protestant “unity”. “Certainly, our book is pointedly critical in one sense of the word but it’s ultimately one that aims for unity, and to attack and critique the barriers that divide Christians that should not divide Christians,” said Walls. And then he stated the kind of barriers which should not “divide Christians”: things like the Lord’s

supper and who can be anointed with oil on their deathbed!⁶ Just two obvious points here (obvious to any biblical Christian, that is): there is a world of difference between the biblical ordinance of the Lord's supper and the blasphemous lie of the Roman Catholic mass; and since when has any true Christian had any interest whatsoever in the completely unbiblical Romish sacrament of what used to be called extreme unction – the anointing of those on their deathbeds with “holy oil”?

Another quote from these two men regarding their brazenly unbiblical concept of “unity”: “And ultimately we want to promote a vision of the Holy Catholic Church that is more expansive and larger than the Roman Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, or the Protestant Church. It's bigger than all of those.”⁷ Even if such “unity” could be achieved, it would be the devil's own unity, for this is worlds apart from the already-real, spiritual unity between all true Christians. Any “unity” with such completely false and antichristian religions as Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy would be the unity of light with darkness, of Christ with Satan. It is an impossibility.

One final quote, demonstrating just how unbiblical and doctrinally confused these two men really are: “Despite all of this and other areas of conflict, Walls and Collins conclude *Roman But Not Catholic* by reiterating their affirmation of the genuine faith of Roman Catholic believers around the world, and prayerfully appeal to John 17:20-21.... They praise Pope Francis' recent comments toward more inclusive practices in celebrating the sacrament of Holy Communion in hope that Protestants currently barred from receiving can one day partake.... ‘Perhaps the pope will take further steps in this same direction, during the pivotal 2017 year, to allow us to celebrate the fundamental reality that we are all characterized by one Lord, one faith, one baptism. We surely hope so.’”⁸ That any truly biblical Protestant, knowing the Scriptures, would even want to partake of the blasphemous fable of the Romish mass is an absurdity. That any truly biblical Protestant, knowing the Scriptures, would call the mass “the sacrament of Holy Communion” is an absurdity. That any truly biblical Protestant, knowing the Scriptures, would refer to Romish faith and Romish baptism as one and the same with true Christian faith and true Christian baptism is an absurdity. These two men reveal, by these statements, that at best they are biblically ignorant and deceived souls. At worst, they are serving the Papacy's own agenda as deceitful workers.

And now for a yet further terrible error, this time from Kevin J. Vanhoozer, another of the leaders behind this “Reforming Catholic Confession”. He is professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. This man said that the Reformation Latin term, *sola scriptura*, is frequently misunderstood, being interpreted as “Scripture alone” as though it is somehow “apart from the Church, apart from tradition, and apart from the Holy Spirit.” But he said this is not its meaning at all, when taken in its rightful, theological context.

This man was therefore claiming that there was a definite cause for *tradition* to be placed alongside Scripture! This is outright Roman Catholic theology. For Rome claims that the Word of God is not the Bible alone, but also the tradition of the Roman Catholic institution.

Going still further, Vanhoozer said that the phrase, “Scripture alone”, does not mean that it is the singular voice people ought to consult, although it does have supreme authority.⁹ This statement is one which many a Papist theologian would be happy to endorse! The cry of all Bible Protestants is: *the Bible alone!* This is in direct opposition to Rome's antichristian doctrine of the Bible *plus* tradition.

In saying such things, he completely negated the entire point of the document, and revealed a *Papist* theology, which many would not have noticed in their desire to sign the document.

Conclusion

If *this* is the quality of doctrinal teaching and expression in our day and age from “Protestants”, then we are far, far worse off than many would have been led to believe. Such “Evangelical” Protestant leaders are well on the road to Rome. The Lord's true remnant Church is much smaller than many would realise. There is no escaping this. It is the tragic reality of the times we live in. And no true Christian would let false Protestants and false Christians like the men quoted above be their

spokesmen, their representatives, their doctrinal teachers, by signing such a wicked, indeed diabolical, document as the “Reforming Catholic Confession.”

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ENDNOTES:

1. *The Book of Revelation: Chapter 10* (five sermons, in MP3 and CD format), by Shaun Willcock. Bible Based Ministries. Available from our website.
2. *Faith and Freedom*, October-November 2017, pg6, quoting “Apostasy Alert”.
www.faithandfreedom.com.au.
3. *The Christian Post*, September 12, 2017. www.christianpost.com.
4. *The Christian Post*, September 12, 2017.
5. *The Christian Post*, October 17, 2017.
6. *The Christian Post*, October 17, 2017.
7. *The Christian Post*, October 17, 2017.
8. *The Christian Post*, October 17, 2017.
9. *The Christian Post*, September 12, 2017.

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