

# The Vatican Role in the Ustasha Genocide in the Independent State of Croatia



Roman Catholic Croatian guards at the Jasenovac concentration camp prepare to execute an inmate. Source: US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

I am posting this because I've been told by some friends that the Roman Catholic Church and policies of the Pope and the Vatican have changed to that of moderation and tolerance in modern times. No longer are they killing and torturing people merely because of non-acceptance of the Pope as the supreme leader of the Church – or so they think. I submit to you that the Vatican and its policies have *not* changed. In areas the Roman Catholic Church is in the minority, they want equality. When they get equality, they want superiority. And when they get superiority, they rule with an iron hand and show no tolerance to Protestant, Orthodox, or another religions. Why? Because **the Roman Catholic Church is a political organization above all!** Like the governments of Communist countries, they do not tolerate opposing parties to their system.

**By Carl Savich**

What role, if any, did the Vatican play in the genocide committed in the Independent State of Croatia, a Roman Catholic state sponsored by the Vatican? This has been a controversial topic regarding World War II historiography. Renewed debate was stirred in 1999 with the publication of Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII (New York: Viking, 1999) by John Cornwell.

## **Vatican Knowledge**

The nature of the Ustasha NDH regime was well-known by the Vatican and by the US government as early as 1941. It was no secret that the Ustasha government sought to exterminate the entire Serbian, Jewish, and Roma populations of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. There was never any intention to deny or to hide this policy by the NDH government itself. In fact, the Ustasha documented the genocide with photographs and even film. Education Minister in the NDH regime Mile Budak openly announced that the policy was to kill a

third, deport a third, and forcefully convert a third of the Serbian population of Croatia and Bosnia. (1) Budak stated in 1941: "Thus, our new Croatia will get rid of all Serbs in our midst in order to become one hundred per cent Catholic within ten years." A policy of mass murder and genocide was openly declared. In a speech made in Zagreb, NDH leader or Poglavnik Ante Pavelic stated: "A good Ustase is one who can use his knife to cut a child from the womb of its mother." (2)

Pope Pius XII defended Ante Pavelic as "a much maligned man" and sent Papal Nuncio Giuseppe Ramiro Marcione (1882-1952) to the NDH regime during World War II as his personal representative. The Vatican did not de jure recognize the NDH state but did send Giuseppe Ramiro Marcione as a delegate or emissary of the Holy See to the Zagreb Episcopate on August 5, 1941. Marcione was publicly seen and photographed with Ante Pavelic and prominent Ustasha religious, political, and military leaders.



Ante Pavelic, center, with Vatican Nuncio or legate Ramiro Marcione, left, and Vatican Secretary to the Nuncio Giuseppe Masucci, at a ceremony in Zapresic, a town northwest of Zagreb.

The Vatican did, however, de facto recognize the NDH. The countries which recognized de jure the NDH, legally, diplomatically, and officially, were: Finland (July 2, 1941); Hungary (April 10, 1941); Germany, Italy and Slovakia (April 15, 1941); Bulgaria (April 21, 1941); Romania (May 6, 1941); Japan (June 7, 1941); Spain (June 27, 1941); Japanese-occupied China (July 5, 1941); Denmark (July 10, 1941); Japanese-occupied Manchuria in China, Manchukuo (August 2, 1941); Japanese-occupied Burma, Japanese-occupied Philippines, the "Free Indian" government, and, Thailand (April 27, 1943). (3) Vichy France did not de jure recognize the NDH state but sent a trade representative, Andre Gailliard, to Zagreb. Vichy negotiated a trade agreement with the NDH on March 16, 1942, thus establishing de facto recognition. Switzerland established a trade agreement with the NDH on September 10, 1941 through trade representative Friedrich Kaestli. The Vatican established immediate and direct diplomatic relations with the NDH Ustasha regime in 1941. What prevented the Vatican from legally recognizing its puppet and proxy NDH state was the potential backlash from the Allies, particularly Great Britain and the US.

The Vatican also had unofficial diplomatic relations with the NDH government through contacts with Croat representatives of the NDH regime Nicola Rusinovic and Erwin Lobkowitz. "These arrangements were semi-secret". (4) But "by March 1942, despite the abundance of evidence pointing to mass killings, the Holy See was nevertheless drawing the Croatian representatives toward official relations." (5) With Germany and Italy poised to win the war in 1942, the Vatican was moving closer to establishing official diplomatic

relations with the NDH.

Did the Vatican know of the mass murders and genocide being committed in the NDH? The three heads of the Vatican Secretariat of State, Domenico Tardini, Giovanni Battista Montini, later Pope Paul VI, and Luigi Maglione, knew of the atrocities in the NDH but did nothing to stop them, remaining passive.

Eugene Tisserant, a French cardinal prominent in the Vatican hierarchy, told Rusinovic on March 6, 1942 that he was aware of Croatian Roman Catholic clerical involvement in the mass murders:



Vatican legate, or personal representative from the Pope to the NDH from 1941 to 1945, Ramiro Marcone, right, with Ustasha leader Ante Pavelic, center. The Vatican Secretary to the Vatican legate is Giuseppe Masucci on left. The Vatican de facto recognized the Independent State of Croatia and established diplomatic relations.

"I know for a fact that it is the Franciscans themselves, as for example Father [Vjekoslav] Simic of Knin, who have taken part in attacks against the Orthodox populations so as to destroy the Orthodox Church. In the same way you destroyed the Orthodox Church in Banja Luka. I know for sure that the Franciscans in Bosnia and Herzegovina have acted abominably, and this pains me. Such acts should not be committed by educated, cultured, civilized people, let alone by priests." (6)

In a meeting of May 27, 1942, Tisserant informed Rusinovic that based on German figures, "350,000 Serbs had disappeared" in the NDH and that "in one single concentration camp there are 20,000 Serbs." (7)

The full extent and nature of the genocide committed in the NDH was fully known by the Vatican by early 1942. The role and complicity of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia and Bosnia in the genocide was also fully known. And yet Eugenio Pacelli, Pope Pius XII, did absolutely nothing. In fact, "Pacelli was never anything but benevolent to the leaders and representatives of the Pavelic regime." (8) As late as 1943, he expressed to Lobkowitz "his pleasure at the personal letter he had received from our Poglavnik." (9) And Ante Pavelic was Pacelli's Poglavnik or Fuehrer in the NDH. Pacelli was not only Hitler's Pope. He was also Pavelic's Pope.

The objectives of the Ustasha regime were known by the Italian government and by the Vatican. Cornwell described "the campaign of terror and extermination conducted by the Ustashe of Croatia against two million Serb Orthodox Christians" that occurred in the Nazi puppet state of Greater Croatia, which included Bosnia-Herzegovina, from 1941-1945:

"An act of 'ethnic cleansing' before that hideous term came into vogue, it was an attempt to create a 'pure' Catholic Croatia by enforced conversions,

deportations, and mass extermination. So dreadful were the acts of torture and murder that even hardened German troops registered their horror. ... Pavelic's onslaught against the Orthodox Serbs remains one of the most appalling civilian massacres known to history." (10)

What knowledge did the Vatican have of these atrocities? Could it have intervened to lessen or to stop them? What actions did the Vatican take after the war?



NDH Poglavnik Ante  
Pavelic, left, with the  
Papal Emissary Ramiro  
Marccone.



NDH Poglavnik Ante Pavelic, left, with the  
Papal Emissary Ramiro Marccone.

What did Pope Pius know about the Ustasha? In 1939, "Pacelli had warmly endorsed Croat nationalism and confirmed the Ustashe perception of history" according to Cornwell when in November, 1939, Alojzije Stepinac came to Rome to meet with the Pope in an attempt to promote the canonization of Nikola Tavelic. Tavelic was a Croat martyr who had been killed in 1591 in Jerusalem and who was canonized by Pope VI in 1970. At that time, Pacelli reiterated a term that Pope Leo X had used to describe the Croats as "the outpost of Christianity", meaning, the outpost of Roman Catholicism. They were seen as a spearhead and as a bulwark against not only the Serbian and Greek Orthodox, but against the Russian Orthodox as well. The Croats were the Vatican's ramrod against the Orthodox.

Immediately after its inception, the NDH engaged in a policy of genocide. On April 25, 1941, the NDH promulgated legislation banning the Cyrillic script. By June, Serbian Orthodox primary and pre-schools were shut down. In May, anti-Jewish laws were passed defining Jews in racial terms, prohibiting the marriage of Jews and Aryans, and sending Jews to the Croat concentration camp of Danica. The Croat Roman Catholic Church immediately sought to convert the Orthodox Serbs to Roman Catholicism. Official statements from the NDH government, however, showed that the policy was to be exclusion, deportation, and extermination, genocide, rather than assimilation. Did the Vatican know of these objectives?

Cornwell wrote that the nature of the Ustasha regime was well-known to the Vatican from the beginning:

"From the outset, the public acts and statements concerning ethnic cleansing

and the anti-Semitic programs were well-known to the Catholic episcopate and Catholic Action... These racist and anti-Semitic programs were therefore also known by the Holy See, and thus by Pacelli, at the point when he greeted Pavelic at the Vatican. These acts were known, moreover, at the very point when clandestine diplomatic links were being forged between Croatia and the Holy See." (11)

On May 18, 1941, Pavelic met Pope Pius XII at the Vatican in what Cornwell described as "a 'devotional' audience" with the Pope. At this meeting, the Vatican de facto recognized the so-called Independent State of Croatia, which included Bosnia-Herzegovina, even though the NDH was an occupied Nazi puppet state, or the creation of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, maintained not by popular will but by military force. Moreover, Abbot Ramiro Marcone was appointed the apostolic legate or Nuncio to Zagreb, the personal representative of the Pope to the NDH. Marcone was a priest of the Benedictine Monastery of Montevergine. He was the personal emissary or ambassador of the Pope to the NDH regime. Marcone and his Secretary, Giuseppe Masucci, would visit the NDH and be photographed with Ante Pavelic, Andrija Artukovic, Alojzije Stepinac, and German and Italian military officers. He was photographed with Pavelic in the town of Zapresic northwest of Zagreb with his secretary Giuseppe Masucci. He was also photographed with Stepinac together with Roman Catholic priests and fascist military officers who are shown giving a fascist salute.

Giuseppe Ramiro Marcone was born in 1882 in Italy. He was ordained a priest of the Order of St. Benedict in 1906. In 1918, he was appointed the Abbot of Montevergine monastery in Italy. He lectured in philosophy at the college of San Anselmo in Rome. According to Cornwell, Marcone "had clearly been selected to soothe and encourage" the Ustasha leaders by Pacelli himself. Marcone died in 1952.

At the time the Vatican de facto recognized the Ustasha NDH state, did it know of the massacres against Serbs? The atrocities were described by Carlo Falconi in his documentation of the crimes in *The Silence of Pius XII* (London: Faber, 1970). On April 28, 1941, Ustasha troops attacked the Bjelovar district where 250 Serbs were killed by being buried alive. In Otocac, several days later, 331 Serbs were murdered. On May 14, in Glina, hundreds of Serbs were murdered in the Orthodox Church after being forcefully converted to Roman Catholicism. There is no evidence that the Vatican or Pope Pius knew of these mass murders.

What did the Vatican know and when? The Vatican knew that Ante Pavelic was "a totalitarian dictator", a fanatical Croat ultra-nationalist zealot and Roman Catholic who was sponsored and installed in power by Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. They knew Pavelic was a hardcore fascist who supported and endorsed Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. They knew about the anti-Serbian, anti-Jewish, and anti-Roma laws that the NDH had passed. They knew Pavelic was committed to the policy of forceful conversions of Orthodox Serbs to Roman Catholicism. Moreover, the Vatican knew that the NDH was a Nazi puppet state created by Nazi Germany that was under German military occupation and control. The NDH was not recognized by the US, Great Britain, or the Soviet Union. The NDH declared war against the Soviet Union and sent Croatian

volunteers to participate in Operation Barbarossa. The NDH had even declared war on the Allies, declaring war against the US and Britain on December 12, 1941, and had sent 8,000 troops to the Russian Front, even sending troops to Stalingrad. The Allies did not recognize the NDH, an Axis belligerent or enemy state. The Vatican, however, did, even if de facto.

The genocide committed in the NDH was open and common knowledge. In *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930–1965* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), historian Michael Phayer concluded that “it is impossible to believe that Stepinac and the Vatican did not know that the Ustasha murders amounted to genocide”. (12)

The massacres and atrocities, indeed, the planned and systematic genocide, were known to the Croatian Catholic clergy and to the episcopate. As Cornwell noted, “the clergy often took a leading part.” Not only did the Croatian Church and clergy know, they were at the forefront of the genocide. The Croatian Roman Catholic priests organized and led the mass murders. As Cornwell noted, priests were in many instances the instigators and leaders of the genocide: “Priests, invariably Franciscans, took a leading part in the massacres. ... Individual Franciscans killed, set fire to homes, sacked villages, and laid waste the Bosnian countryside at the head of Ustashe bands.” (13) He cited an Italian reporter who described an attack in September, 1941 south of Banja Luka in northern Bosnia. A Franciscan priest was exhorting Ustashe troops with a crucifix. It was the intervention of Italian troops that prevented a larger bloodbath. The Italian Army provided protection to Serbs, Jews, and Roma, saving thousands of lives.

The Vatican could plead ignorance with what was occurring in Poland and elsewhere in Europe, but not in Croatia. According to Cornwell, Pacelli was “better informed of the situation in Croatia” than he was of anywhere else in Europe other than Italy. His legate Marcone made repeated visits to Croatia and brought back eyewitness accounts. Croatian bishops, some of who sat in the Ustasha parliament, communicated with the Pope and the Vatican on a regular basis. Pacelli also had access to the BBC, which was monitored and translated for the Vatican by Francis Osborne, the British minister to the Vatican. The BBC broadcast news reports on the atrocities in Croatia which no one could miss. On February 16, 1942, the BBC broadcast the following report attacking Zagreb archbishop Stepinac for his complicity in the mass murders:

“The worst atrocities are being committed in the environs of the archbishop of Zagreb. The blood of brothers is flowing in streams. The Orthodox are being forcibly converted to Catholicism and we do not hear the archbishop’s voice preaching revolt. Instead it is reported that he is taking part in Nazi and Fascist parades.” (14)



Vatican Nuncio or legate Ramiro  
Marcone, center, with Poglavnik  
Ante Pavelic, right, and Vatican  
Secretary to the Nuncio Giuseppe

Masucci.

How was it possible for the Vatican not to know of these mass murders and forceful conversions when the Roman Catholic Church was hierarchical in organization? As Cornwell asked: "How was it that despite the strictly authoritarian power relationship between the papacy and the local Church—a power relationship that Pacelli had done so much to establish—no attempt was made from the Vatican center to halt the killings, the forced conversions, the appropriation of Orthodox property?" Why didn't Pacelli "dissociate" the Vatican from the Ustasha genocidal policies? Why didn't Pacelli "condemn the perpetrators", attacking the genocide? If the Vatican took a more forceful stance, could lives have been saved? The answer to this question can be found in the actions of the Vatican, before, during, and after the Roman Catholic-sponsored genocide in the NDH. What is most revealing is the position of the Church after the war, when the full extent of the genocide was fully known.

What was the extent of the genocide in the NDH? Cornwell remarked: "The tally almost defies belief." He offered these numbers from *The Final Solution: Origins and Implementation*, edited by David Cesarini (London: Routledge, 1996): 487,000 Orthodox Serbs and 27,000 Gypsies were murdered between 1941 and 1945 in the NDH. (15) Out of a population of 45,000 Jews, approximately 30,000 were murdered during the same period. 20,000-25,000 were murdered in the Croatian death camps, such as Jasenovac and Nova Gradiska, while 7,000 were sent to the gas chambers. Even if we assume these figures are inflated and subject to debate, the extent of the genocide was not minimal or insignificant. This was a genocide.

## **Operation Barbarossa and the Tisserant Plan**

The Vatican regarded the Soviet Union and the spread of Communism as their greatest threats. (16) The Balkans were seen as a buffer between the Vatican and Soviet Russia, Eastern Orthodox Russia. As Cornwell noted, Benito Mussolini's invasion and occupation of Greece and Yugoslavia was supported. The Italian war against Greece was seen with "a measure of optimism" by the Vatican. Benito Mussolini had provided bases and training camps to Ante Pavelic before the war. Croat and Bosnian Muslim troops from the NDH would join Italian and German troops on the Eastern Front, in the Soviet Union.

The Vatican saw the conquest and destruction of Yugoslavia and Russia by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy as opportunities for the expansion of Roman Catholicism into the East. (17) Eugene Tisserant was appointed in 1936 the Vatican Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, holding the post until 1959. He was a French priest who held several prominent high level positions at the Vatican. He was infamous for the so-called Tisserant Plan which was a plan to convert Eastern Orthodox to Roman Catholicism.



The decisive battle of World War II: Russian Red Army troops with T-34 tanks attack German



positions at Kursk, 1943.

The Tisserant Plan was documented by Reinhard Heydrich, head of the RSHA, in his report "New Tactics in Vatican Russia Work". For the Vatican, the destruction and dismemberment of Yugoslavia was an opportunity to expand Roman Catholicism in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. The weakening, and even outright destruction, of the rival Orthodox Church was planned and expected. The Vatican had its sights on Russia and Eastern Europe as well. In *The Entity: Five Centuries of Secret Vatican Espionage* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008) by Eric Frattini, translated by Dick Cluster, the Tisserant Plan is analyzed. Tisserant and Father Robert Leiber devised the plan to use the German conquest and occupation of the Soviet Union to expand Roman Catholic influence. Testifying at the Nuremberg Trials on October 12, 1945, Franz von Papen stated: "The reevangelization of the Soviet union was a Vatican operation, whether carried out through its missionary department or its secret service." In the Soviet Union, the plan was led by Niccolo Estorzi and Holy Alliance agents. Heydrich wrote in his report: "The pope's agents are taking advantage of the situation, and this must be stopped." Vatican agents were infiltrating Nazi-occupied areas of Russia to convert them to Catholicism.

The decisive battle of World War II was on the Eastern Front in 1943 at Kursk. This battle broke the back of the German Army and forced it into a strategic retreat for the remainder of the war. Germany would lose the war. What the Vatican did was to prepare for the military defeat of Germany. The Vatican began to disassociate itself from the more extreme elements of fascism. It was at this time that Krunoslav Draganovic settled at the Vatican, leaving his position in the NDH regime, and preparing the way for the escape of the leaders of the NDH regime and the plundered property and assets they had seized from murdered Serbs, Jews, and Roma. Investigators after the war determined that \$80 million was smuggled out of the NDH. (18) The Vatican provided help in storing the proceeds and in allowing it to be laundered.

## **American Knowledge**

When did the US government learn of the massacres and systematic genocide in the NDH? The US knew of the mass murders and genocide in the NDH in 1941. Yugoslav ambassador to the US Konstantin Fotich met with FDR on December 20, 1941 and informed him of the massacres in the NDH. Fotich had sent a memorandum to FDR on December 5 which described the massacres with a request that he be allowed to present further documentation and support. According to Fotich, on August 19, 1941, the chief of the Balkans desk of the US State Department had given him a report on the NDH's "comprehensive policy of extermination of the Serbian race in the Independent State of Croatia". (19) FDR was "deeply shocked by the atrocities perpetrated against the Serbs". He expressed to Fotich "his great sympathy" for the Serbs. FDR "spoke with admiration of the resistance". He told him after the war "the Serbs will rise again as a great people." (20)





From left, Andrija Artukovic, the Interior Minister of the NDH, Vatican Legate Ramiro Marcone, and Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac, at an Ustasha ceremony.



Eleanor Roosevelt had also learned of the mass murders and atrocities in the NDH in 1941-42. (21) The author Avro Manhattan met Eleanor Roosevelt at a private dinner party in Upper Brook Street, Mayfair, London in the late 1940s. At the time he was researching and writing his book on the Ustasha massacres in the NDH. In 1953, he published *Terror Over Yugoslavia: The Threat to Europe*, (London, UK: C.A. Watts, 1953). In 1986, he published *The Vatican's Holocaust: The sensational account of the most horrifying religious massacre of the 20th century* (Springfield, MO: Ozark Books, 1986).

He asked her if she had ever heard of the massacres and atrocities in the NDH. She replied: "One of the worst, if not the worst, crimes of the war. I heard of them in the winter of 1941-2. Neither I nor my husband [FDR] at first believed them to be true."

"I did not believe them either," Manhattan told her. "I assumed them to be propaganda."

"We thought the same," replied Mrs. Roosevelt. "The Catholic lobby was the most successful at the White House for years."



He asked her if she was familiar with Slovenian Roman Catholic author Louis Adamic. She replied that she was. Adamic had been one of the many who had persuaded her husband that the atrocity stories from Croatia had been concocted by the Nazi propaganda machine.

He inquired if she could explain why the Catholic atrocities were not as well known as the Nazi ones?

"Nazi Germany is no more," replied Mrs. Roosevelt. "The Catholic Church is still here with us. More powerful than ever. With her own Press and the World Press at her bidding. Anything published about the atrocities in the future will not be believed. . ."

Manhattan then informed her that he was writing a book on the Vatican role in the atrocities in the NDH.

"Your book might convince a few," she commented. "But what about the hundreds of millions already brainwashed by Catholic propaganda?"



Manhattan recalled: "A few years later, in 1953, when the book was eventually published, although two editions were sold within weeks, no part of the

British or American Press dared even to mention it." Adamic wrote that "the atrocities were all propaganda ... to stir up anti-Catholicism..."

FDR knew of the genocide in Croatia and Bosnia and was appalled to the point that he did not think it possible for Serbs and Croats to live in the same country. In *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948) by Robert E. Sherwood, Harry L. Hopkins, one of FDR's closest advisers, took notes on the meeting held on March 15, 1943 between FDR and Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary. They discussed the post-war European landscape. Regarding Serbia, FDR was adamant that Serbs and Croats should not be in the same country:

"The President expressed his oft repeated opinion that the Croats and Serbs had nothing in common and that it is ridiculous to try to force two such antagonistic peoples to live together under one government. He, the President, thought that Serbia, itself, should be established by itself and the Croats put under a trusteeship. At this point Eden indicated his first obvious objection to the Trustee method which the President is going to propose for many states. Eden did not push it but it was clear to me that the British Government have made up their minds that they are going to oppose this. Eden thought the President's opinion about the inability of the Croats and the Serbs to live together a little pessimistic and he, Eden, believed it could be done." (22)

## **Vatican Reaction**

How did the Vatican react to the genocide committed in the NDH? Not only did the Vatican deny and ignore it, but took an active part to hide and suppress it and to protect the perpetrators from prosecution and justice. After the war, the major planners of the genocide, Ante Pavelic and Andrija Artukovic, were helped to escape by the Vatican through the Ratlines. Dinko Sakic and Vjekoslav Maks Luburic also escaped. A Croatian Roman Catholic priest, Krunoslav Draganovic, who himself had been a part of the Ustasha NDH regime, organized and masterminded the escapes. In addition, he was able to launder the assets that were seized from Serbs, Jews, and Roma in the NDH. The Vatican has never acknowledged its role in the genocide committed in the NDH. This is genocide denial. It is denial of the Holocaust.

The Vatican protected the accused Ustasha war criminals and assisted them in escaping prosecution for war crimes. In *Pius XII, The Holocaust, and the Cold War* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), Phayer showed that the Vatican put diplomatic pressure on the US and the UK not to apprehend Ante Pavelic or any other wanted Ustasha war criminals. (23) US intelligence had located Pavelic but was prevented from arresting him. Why would the US not arrest arguably one of the most notorious mass murderers of World War II? Why would the US help to shield an accused war criminal suspected of committing genocide? Why and how could such a fanatical fascist accused of genocide escape arrest and prosecution? Why was Ante Pavelic allowed to escape to Argentina by the US government?

The answer is that the Vatican orchestrated his escape. Why? Phayer quoted US Counter Intelligence Corps agent William Gowen (the son of Franklin Gowen, a

US diplomat in the Vatican), who reported in 1947 that Pavelic's "contacts are so high and his present position is so compromising to the Vatican, that any extradition of the subject would be a staggering blow to the Roman Catholic Church". Pavelic and the other Ustasha war criminals guilty of genocide were allowed to escape to protect the Vatican.

Both Britain and the US could have arrested Pavelic and the other Ustasha war crime suspects but chose not to, enabling them to escape and to elude prosecution for war crimes and for genocide. In *Hunting Evil: The Nazi War Criminals Who Escaped and the Quest to Bring Them to Justice* (New York: Broadway Books, a division of Random House, 2009), Guy Walters documented a US CIC report that stated that the British had allowed Ante Pavelic to escape. In October, 1946, a CIC report stated that "there can no longer be any doubt that the British aided the escape of Dr. Ante Pavelich." The US also knew of Pavelic's location but refused to arrest him. (24) Walters showed that the US knew where Pavelic's daughter lived as she reported regularly to US occupation authorities. According to Walters, the British reported that: "It's no use trying to get Pavelic, the Yanks are backing him." (25) In August, 1947, US CIC agent William Gowen reported that Pavelic was "receiving the protection of the Vatican." (26) Why were Britain, the US, and the Vatican all helping Pavelic to elude capture? Gowen wrote that the Vatican opposed the extradition of Pavelic because his capture would only "weaken the forces fighting against atheism and Communism in its fight against the Church." (27) In other words, the Serbs would only benefit. The Orthodox would benefit. The Russians would benefit. And ultimately Communism and the USSR would be the beneficiaries. It was a zero sum game.

Cui bono? Who benefits? Who would gain if Pavelic was arrested and prosecuted for war crimes and genocide? Certainly not the Vatican. Only the Orthodox would benefit. Only the Serbs would benefit. Only Communism would benefit. Only the USSR would benefit. This is how the Vatican sold the idea to the US government. Arresting Pavelic would be detrimental in the Cold War against the USSR. This had much wider political implications. If the Vatican were discredited, the Communist Party in Italy would benefit, which might allow it to win the elections. The US supported democracy in Italy only if a non-Communist party won the elections. Because the Italian Communist Party was poised for victory in Italy, the US did everything it could to rig the elections, to deny democracy.

Moreover, this had the potential to set off a chain reaction for other parts of Western Europe. More importantly, it would reveal the true core of Roman Catholicism to the mass public. People would see that the Vatican was corrupt and hollow at its center, obsessed with power at any price, even genocide. It would show the moral bankruptcy of the Vatican, or the Roman Catholic Church. And this could not be allowed to happen. Especially not during the ideological conflict of the Cold War, which was ultimately a contest for the hearts and minds of the people.

The Vatican could never acknowledge that it was complicit in genocide, even though the evidence is abundantly clear that it was. The largest religious denomination in the US is Roman Catholicism at 23% of the population. There are over a billion Roman Catholics globally. The decision was an easy one for

the US. As a result, Pavelic was allowed to settle in Argentina and live a comfortable life there, while Artukovic was allowed to settle in the US itself, living in Seal Beach, California as a model American citizen.

The Vatican continues to suppress information on its role in the NDH. John Cornwell noted that "more than half a century after the war, the Vatican has still failed to make a clean breast of what it knew about the Croatian atrocities and the early stages of the Final Solution, and when it knew it."



Vatican Legate Ramiro Marcone, third from right, Alojzije Stepinac, first on right, and Ante Pavelic, partially obscured, far left, at the 1944 funeral for Marko Dosen, the President of the Ustasha Parliament.

## Conclusion

The Vatican denied and ignored the role it played in the genocide committed in Croatia and Bosnia during World War II. Moreover, it took an active part in concealing and suppressing not only the genocide itself, but its role in that genocide. Finally, it acted to protect the perpetrators and to shield them from prosecution and justice. The Vatican has never addressed these issues.

## Footnotes

1. Vladimir Dedijer, *The Yugoslav Auschwitz and the Vatican: The Croatian Massacre of the Serbs During World War II* (New York: Prometheus, 1992), p. 141. Mile Budak made this statement in a July 22, 1941 speech.
2. Ronald H. Bailey, *Partisans and Guerrillas* (Time-Life Books, 1978), p. 87. "A good Ustashi," he told his men, "is he who can use his knife to cut a child from the womb of its mother."
3. Mato Rupic, Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia.
4. John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (New York: Viking, 1999), p. 258.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 259.
7. Ibid., pp. 259-260.
8. Ibid., p. 260.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 249.

11. Ibid., p. 251.
12. Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930–1965* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), p. 38.
13. Cornwell, p. 254.
14. Ibid., p. 256.
15. Jonathan Steinberg, "Types of Genocide? Croats, Serbs and Jews, 1941-45", in *The Final Solution*, edited by David Cesarini (London: 1996), p. 175.
16. Cornwell, p. 260. Pope Pius XII regarded the Soviet Union as the "one, real and principal enemy of Europe".
17. Ibid., pp. 264-65. "The potential for enticing mass conversions of the 'schismatic' Orthodox, through their close proximity to the Catholic Eastern rite, explains Pacelli's indulgent policy toward Pavelic and his murderous regime."
18. Ibid., p. 266.
19. Constantin Fotich, *The War We Lost: Yugoslavia's Tragedy and the Failure of the West* (New York: Viking Press, 1948), pp. 117-118.
20. Ibid., pp. 128-129.
21. Avro Manhattan, *The Vatican's Holocaust* (Springfield, MO: Ozark Books), 1986, pp. 107-108.
22. Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), p. 711.
23. Michael Phayer. *Pius XII, The Holocaust, and the Cold War* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 2008, p. 220..
24. Guy Walters, *Hunting Evil: The Nazi War Criminals Who Escaped and the Quest to Bring Them to Justice* (New York: Broadway Books, a division of Random House, 2009), p. 122.
25. Ibid., p. 120
26. Norman J. W. Goda, "The Ustasha: Murder and Espionage", pp. 203-226, in Richard Breitman, Norman J. W. Goda, Timothy Naftali, Robert Wolfe, *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 214-215.
27. Ibid.

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## [The Evangelical Ecumenical Return to Rome Movement Exposed](#)



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## The Pope and the Papacy

And for tonight I want to talk about the Pope and the Papacy because it's been in the news so much. This isn't really going to be a sermon, I'm just going to try to take you through a little bit of an understanding of it. I want to talk about the Pope himself and then talk about the Papacy in general. I want to tell you at the beginning what is at stake, because what I am going to say will surely offend those who are devout Catholics. It will surely offend those who believe that Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ. Some will read it as unkind and unloving, but nothing is more loving than the truth. To let somebody perish in a false system isn't loving at all. To rescue people out of a damning and false religion is the only loving thing to do.

And there's a lot at stake here. Not too many years ago, some evangelical Protestants got together, Chuck Colson and some others, Bill Bright and some others, and they met with some Roman Catholics and they came up with a document called "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." And in that document they celebrated a common faith and a common mission. They said we need to embrace each other and carry out this gospel mission together. This was shocking, to put it mildly, to many – to all of those people who affirm clearly a Biblical gospel. There was immediately a counter to that and all kinds of things brought to bear upon the signers of ECT. Perhaps the most notable, at least in my experience, was a special private session called in Florida where I was locked up with a very formidable group of people for a period of seven hours, including those on the other side, J.I. Packer, Charles Colson being the notable ones; Bill Bright from Campus Crusade.



There was myself and R.C. Sproul, Michael Horton representing the biblical side and reformed theology, and for seven hours we talked about this. What is the gospel? Are the Catholics saved or not saved? That's really important. It became a discussion of are the Anglicans saved or not saved? Is everybody who's within "Christendom" automatically saved? Are they saved because they're baptized? Are they saved because they "believe in Jesus?" It was a very heated discussion at many points. What was at stake? I'll tell you what was at stake. What was at stake is whether or not we evangelize Roman Catholics. That's what's at stake. One billion of them in the world, are they a mission field or are they our co-laborers for Christ? That changes everything. Everything.

On the other side one of the leading evangelicals said, "I think it's so wonderful that we can now see Catholics as Christians because that means millions and millions of people are Christians." As if somehow by them deciding they were Christians they became Christian. I was absolutely incredulous. I almost fell off my chair. It was like what a monumental meeting this is. We just redeemed millions of people without leaving the room. But that is what is at stake in this. Are Roman Catholics the mission field or do we embrace them as fellow believers in Jesus Christ?

The mood of Evangelicalism today is to embrace them. That's what all the spokesmen, self-appointed spokesmen for Evangelicalism keep saying in the media; some of them evangelists, most of them evangelists by their own definition. These people are our brothers and sisters in Christ, indeed the Pope is our brother in Christ, indeed the Pope is the greatest spiritual and moral leader of the past 100 years in the world. Is the Pope in heaven? Of course the Pope is in heaven. He was good and he suffered, etc.

Reclassifying the Pope, reclassifying Roman Catholics as believers isn't that simple. It has massive implications. It has implications that literally overturn centuries of missionary effort. It has massive implications that overturn centuries, if not millennia, of martyrdom. In the long war on the truth, the most formidable, relentless and deceptive enemy has been Roman Catholicism. It is an apostate, corrupt, heretical, false Christianity. It is a front for the kingdom of Satan. The true church of the Lord Jesus Christ has always understood this. And even through the Dark Ages, from 400 to 1500, prior to the Reformation, genuine Christian believers set themselves apart from that system and were brutally punished and executed for their rejection of that system.

It's not my purpose tonight to go into all that is Roman Catholicism and we will do that in the fall. We will do that. We'll take a look at it from many angles, but those believers throughout those centuries along with genuine and discerning believers today understand this is a false system. It has a false priesthood. It has a false source of revelation, tradition in the magisterium. It has illegitimate power granted to it by this magisterium, this papal curia. It engages in idolatry by the worship of saints and the veneration of angels. It conducts an horrific exultation of Mary above Christ and even God. It conducts a twisted sacrament of the Mass by which Jesus is sacrificed again and again.

It offers false forgiveness through the confessional. It calls for the uselessness of infant baptism and other sacraments. Motivated by money, it has invented Purgatory. And by the way, Purgatory is what makes the whole system work. Take out Purgatory and it's a hard sell to be a Catholic. People hang in there because of the deception of Purgatory. Purgatory is the safety net. When you die you don't go to hell, you go there and get things sorted out and finally get to heaven if you've been a good Catholic. Take away that safety net, that's a hard sell because in the Catholic system you can never know you're saved. You can never know you're going to heaven. You just keep trying and trying. As the priest said on a television program the other night, we are all engaged in a long journey toward perfection. Well, if you're engaged in a long journey toward perfection it's pretty discouraging.

People in that system guilt-ridden, fear-ridden, no knowledge of whether or not they're going to get into the kingdom. The threat of a mortal sin which throws you back out again, and the only thing that makes it work is Purgatory. If there's no Purgatory, if there's no safety net to catch me, then give me some opportunity to get into heaven. It's a second chance. It's another chance after death. I can't buy into this. So they had to invent Purgatory. It's just too much without it.

The harm of indulgences, selling forgiveness for money, the false gospel of works – you participate in your salvation by your good works – the abomination of idols and relics, prayers for the dead, the perversion of forced celibacy, and so it goes. But at the top of the pile of all of this is the amazing, amazing Papacy. The Pope is the one at the top of the Roman Catholic Church who has, in a word, usurped the headship of Christ over his church. The reformers have always understood this. With unashamed boldness, they understood this and they declared this and they faced death for it. Martin Luther, 1483-1546, Luther proved by the revelations of Daniel and John, by the epistles of Paul, Peter and Jude, says the historian D'Aubigné, that the reign of antichrist predicted and described in the Bible was none other than the papacy and all the people said, "Amen." "A holy terror seized their souls. It was the antichrist whom they beheld seated on the pontifical throne. This new idea which derived greater strength from the prophetic descriptions launched forth by Luther in the midst of his contemporaries inflicted the most terrible blow on Rome."

Based on his study of scripture, Martin Luther finally declared, "We here are of the conviction that the papacy is the seat of the seed of the true and real antichrist. I owe the Pope no other obedience than that I owe to antichrist." Luther said, "I am persuaded that if at this time St. Peter in person should preach all the articles of Holy Scripture and only deny the Pope's authority, power and primacy and say that the Pope is not the head of all Christendom, they would cause him to be hanged." Yet if Christ himself were again on earth and should preach, without all doubt the Pope would crucify him again.

John Calvin, 1509-1564, "Some persons think us too severe and censorious when we call the Roman Pontiff antichrist, but those who are of this opinion do not consider that they bring the same charge of presumption against Paul himself after whom we speak and whose language we adopt. I shall briefly show

that Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 2 are not capable to any other interpretation than that which applies them to the papacy." They saw in the antichrist the papacy, the Pope. Why? Because they had some special insight that, in fact, the final antichrist was actually to be a Pope? No. Because the Pope personified everything that the scripture described the antichrist to be.

John Knox, 1505-1572, the great Scottish Presbyterian sought to counteract the tyranny which the Pope himself had for so many ages exercised over the church. He himself said the Papacy is the very antichrist, the Pope being the son of perdition of whom Paul speaks. Thomas Cranmer, one of the great martyrs in England, died in 1556, said, "Whereof it follows Rome to be the seat of antichrist and the Pope to be the very antichrist himself, I could prove the same by many scriptures." The Westminster Confession was written in 1647. The Westminster Confession, the confession of the reformers says, "There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalts himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God."

And again I say it isn't that he is the final antichrist, but he is in his time and in this age the very embodiment of antichrist. And there are, says John, many antichrists in the world before the final one. Cotton Mather, again an American Puritan who died in 1728, "The oracles of God foretold the rising of an Antichrist in the Christian Church: and in the Pope of Rome, all the characteristics of that Antichrist are so marvelously answered that if any who read the Scriptures do not see it, there is a marvelous blindness upon them." And Spurgeon, "It is the bound and duty of every Christian to pray against this Antichrist, and as to what Antichrist is, no sane man ought to raise a question. If it be not the popery in the Church of Rome there is nothing in the world that can be called by that name." Again, I say John said there are many antichrists. Here is the supreme embodiment of it to these great leaders, these great reformed leaders through the ages.

Spurgeon went on to say, "Popery is contrary to Christ's gospel and is the antichrist and we ought to pray against it. It should be the daily prayer of every believer that the antichrist might be hurled like a millstone into the flood and for Christ, because it wounds Christ, because it robs Christ of his glory, because it puts sacramental efficacy in the place of his atonement and lifts a piece of bread into the place of the Savior and a few drops of water into the place of the Holy Spirit. And puts a mere fallible man like ourselves up as the Vicar of Christ on Earth. IF we pray against it, because it is against him, we shall love the persons though we hate their errors. We shall love their souls though we loathe and detest their dogmas. And so the breath of our prayers will be sweetened because we turn our faces toward Christ when we pray."

It was 1553-1558, a terrible five years in England, the reign of Bloody Mary and all that began seven years after Luther's death. Mary came into England and restored the Pope's authority in England and immediately all Bibles were removed from the churches. All Bible printing ceased and was forbidden. It became a capital crime. Eight hundred English ministers fled to Geneva. Three

hundred Protestants were burned at the stake. The first martyr to Mary was John Rogers, a London minister who translated the wonderful Tyndale-Matthews Bible – I've held one of those first editions in my own hand. Ridley and Latimer, the two famous martyrs burned at the stake at Oxford. And William Tyndale, blessed William Tyndale; chaste for years and finally martyred for the crime of translating the Bible into English. All this under the leadership of, and for the satisfaction, of the Roman system and the Pope.

Luther, in the small called articles wrote this, "All things which the Pope, from a power so false, mischievous, blasphemous and arrogant has done and undertaken, have been and still are purely diabolical affairs and transactions for the ruin of the entire Holy Christian Church and for the destruction of the first and chief article concerning the redemption made through Jesus Christ." Luther didn't mince words. He said further, "The Pope is the very antichrist who is exalted himself above and opposed himself against Christ because he will not permit Christians to be saved." Further Luther said, "It is nothing else than the devil himself, because above and against God he urges and disseminates his papal falsehoods concerning Masses, Purgatory, monastic life, one's own works, fictitious divine worship, which is the very papacy, and condemns, murders and tortures all Christians who don't exalt and honor these abominations of the Pope above all things. Therefore just as little as we can worship the devil himself as Lord and God we can endure his apostle the Pope. For to lie and to kill and destroy a body and soul eternally, that is wherein his papal government really consists."

Back to Spurgeon, "Of all the dreams that have ever deluded men, and probably of all blasphemies that ever were uttered, there has never been one which is more absurd and which is more fruitful in all manner of mischief than the idea that the bishop of Rome can be the head of the church of Jesus Christ." No, these popes die and how could the church live if its head were dead? The true head ever lives and the church ever lives in him. And Spurgeon said, "A man" – this is very interesting – "A man who deludes other people by degrees comes to delude himself. The deluder first makes dupes out of others and then becomes a dupe to himself. I should not wonder but what the Pope really believes that he is infallible and that he ought to be saluted as "His Holiness." It must have taken him a good time to arrive at that eminence of self deception. But he's got to, I daresay, by now and everyone who kisses his toe confirms him in this insane idea. When everybody else believes a flattering falsehood concerning you, you come, at last, to believe it yourself or at least to think it may be so.

"The Pharisees, being continually called to learned rabbi, father, the holy scribe, the devout and pious doctor, the sanctified teacher, believed the flattering compliments. They used grand phrases in those days and doctors of divinity were very common, almost as common as they are now. And the crowd of doctors and rabbis helped to keep each other in countenance by repeating one another's fine names until they believed they meant something. Dear Friends," says Spurgeon, "It's very difficult to receive honor and expect it, and yet to keep your eyesight, for men's eyes gradually grow dull through the smoke of the incense which is burned before them. And when their eyes become dim with self conceit, their own great selves conceal the cross and make them

unable to believe the truth.”

Spurgeon said, “Christ did not redeem his church with his blood so the Pope would come in and steal away the glory. He never came from heaven to earth. He never poured out his very heart that he might purchase his people. That a poor sinner, a mere man, should be set upon high to be admired by all the nations and to call himself God’s representative on earth, Christ has always been the head of his church.” Spurgeon knew what the reformers knew, what any true student of scripture knows. The Pope stood at the top of an illegitimate system, particularly and specifically at the top of an illegitimate priesthood. And Spurgeon wrote this, “When a fellow comes forward in all sorts of curious garments and says he’s a priest, the poorest child of God may say, “Stand away and don’t interfere with my office. I am a priest. I know not what you may be. You surely must be a priest of Baal.” For the only mention of the word vestments in scripture is in connection with the Temple of Baal.

“The priesthood belongs to all the saints. They sometimes call you laity, but the Holy Ghost says of all the saints, “you are God’s klēros.” You are God’s clergy. Every child of God is a clergyman or a clergywoman. There are no priestly distinctions known in scripture. “Away with them,” said Spurgeon, “away with them forever.” The prayer book says, “Then shall the priest say.” What a pity that word was ever left there. The very word priest has the smell of the sulfur of Rome about it, that so long as it remains, the Church of England will give forth an ill savor. Call yourself a priest, sir. I wonder, men are not ashamed to take the title. When I collect what priests have done in all ages, what priests connected with the Church of Rome have done, I repeat what I have often said. I would sooner a man pointed at me in the street and called me a devil than call me a priest, for bad as the devil has been, he has hardly been able to match the crimes and cruelties and villainies that have been transacted under the cover of a special priesthood.

From that may we be delivered, but the priesthood of God’s saints, the priesthood of holiness which offers prayer and praise to God, this we have because thou hast made us priests. That is what the saints are. The Roman Empire then is, in the view of these men of God through the ages, a front line for Satan. And for Spurgeon Rome is a deadly enemy, first of all, as well as a mission field. Spurgeon said we must have no truce and make no treaty with Rome. He said this, “War. War to the knife with her. Peace there cannot be. She cannot have peace with us, we cannot have peace with her. She hates the true church and we can only say that the hatred is reciprocated. We would not lay a hand upon her priests. We would not touch a hair of their heads. Let them be free, but their doctrine we would destroy from the face of the earth as the doctrine of devils.

“So let it perish, O God, and let that evil thing become as the fat of lambs, into smoke let it consume. Yay, into smoke let it consume.” You can just hear him preaching that in the tabernacle in London. He went on to say, “We must fight the Lord’s battles against this giant error, whichever shape it takes, and so must we do with every error that pollutes the church. Slay it utterly. Let none escape. Fight the Lord’s battles even though it be an error that is in the evangelical church, yet we must smite it.” We stand on those

shoulders. What is our response to this current issue, a truce with Rome? Are we going to betray the martyrs? Are we going to betray the history of our faith? Are we going to betray those who lived and died to get us the truth? Are we going to betray the Tyndales and the Luthers and the Calvins and all the rest? Are we so senseless, are we so blind, are we so ignorant, are we so faithless, are we so cowardly that we will not fight?

The doctrinal ignorance of the evangelical church is shocking, matched only by its cowardice, I fear. That has certainly been revealed to everybody in the recent response to the death of the Pope and the installation of his successor. The promotion of Catholicism that we've seen in the media in the last couple of months has had no equal in history. This is the single greatest promotion of the Roman Catholic system in the history of that system. The world media has set aside the sickening pedophilia, the abuse issues, to parade the pomp and circumstance of this false system as if it were truly all glorious. It is a classic illustration of the old story of the emperor's new clothes. Spiritually it's naked. And here we are at the very time when Roman Catholicism is receiving through the devil's medium – since he controls both – its greatest exposure, it is perpetrating on the world its greatest seduction. It is bringing to the world its damning delusion as never before and protestants and evangelical representatives are just embracing it and its damnable heresies.

The media, have you noticed how uncritical they are? Have you noticed how they don't ever bring up the scandal of the priests? We hear people say, "Well, Catholicism is a different denomination." Catholicism isn't a different denomination, it's a different religion. I don't think people know the difference between a denomination and a religion. Has Rome changed? No. Oh, Rome morphs. Rome is chameleon. Whatever it needs to be in any nation at any time it will become. Whatever it takes. That's how the devil always works. He moves, changes, to become whatever wins over people. But here is protestant evangelicalism abandoning sound doctrine, shaming the name of Christ, and all in bold relief so the whole world can see. And the world was watching the death of Pope John Paul II in an unrivaled spectacle of worship given to a man.

The question came up is the Pope in heaven? And you hear all these people say yes, yes. People have asked me, "Is the Pope in heaven?" And my answer is, "Is the Pope Catholic?" Isn't that the answer? I think he is. I think the Pope is Catholic. Does he believe Catholic theology? Yes. He is the guardian of Catholic theology. You get in by works, by Mary, by penance, by baptism, by confession, by rosary. No, this is another gospel. This is not the true gospel. A couple of weeks ago, two messages, we talked about the nature of saving faith and we reminded you salvation is by faith alone. Not in Catholicism, by a combination of grace and faith and works. But we know what the New Testament teaches.

"No one," Romans 3:20 says, "Will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the law." Romans 3:26, "God justifies those who have faith in Jesus." Faith alone, Christ alone. Romans 3:28, "We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law." Romans 4, "Abraham was justified not by works. If he was justified by works he had something to

boast about." But what does scripture say? He believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. When a man works his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However to the man who doesn't work but trusts God, who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Romans 4, "It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise," verses 13 and 14, "it was through faith." Romans 9:30-32, "The gentiles who didn't pursue righteousness have obtained it; righteousness, that is, by faith." Romans 10:4, "Christ is the end of the law so there may be righteousness for everyone who believes." Romans 11:5-6, "There's a remnant chosen by grace and if by grace it is no longer by works. If it were, grace would no longer be grace." Galatians 2:16, "A man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So too we have put our faith in Jesus that we may be justified by faith, not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."

Galatians 3:10, "And all who rely on observing the law are under a curse because cursed is everyone who doesn't continue to do everything written in the book of the law." "The righteous will live by faith," Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you are already saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God and not of works, so that no one can boast." Paul in Philippians 3 gives his testimony. He says, "Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but a righteousness which is through faith in Christ; the righteousness which comes through God and is my faith." Titus 3, "God saved us not because of righteous things which we have done, but because of his mercy having been justified by his grace. We have become heirs of the hope of eternal life."

You know all those verses. Salvation is by faith alone, in Christ alone, through God's grace alone. When you put your trust in Jesus Christ, God declares you righteous not because you are, but because he imputes the righteousness of Christ to you, because he imputes your sin to him. Christ bears your sin, you receive his righteousness. This is the glory of the great doctrine of justification. Roman Catholicism does not believe that. The Council of Trent, 1545-1563, came out with statements. Listen to some of them.

"To those who work well unto the end and trust in God, eternal life is to be offered." That doesn't sound like anything I just read. "To those who work well unto the end and trust in God, eternal life is to be offered." Listen to this. "It is given as a reward promised by God himself to be faithfully given to their good works and merits. By those very works, which have been done in God, fully satisfied the divine law according to the state of this life and to have truly merited eternal life." Eternal life in the Catholic system is something you earn by your works. You merit it and you receive it because of your merit. That is absolute and total contradiction. That is another gospel.

There are hundreds of canons that came out of the Council of Trent. I'll just share a few. I did a few of these two weeks ago, but some of the Canons, just listen. This is what Trent, this is Catholic dogma. "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.” And the pronounced damnation on anybody who said salvation was by faith alone. These were directed directly at the reformers.

Another one, “If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ’s sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema.” And they keep saying it again and again. Another one, “If anyone says that the righteousness 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 and not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema.” In other words, the reformers understood the Bible as well, as all true believers had, that works are the results of justification not the cause. But if you say that you’re cursed by Roman Catholicism and the Council of Trent.

Here’s the final one. “If anyone says that the good works of the one justified are in such a manner that 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 whose living member he is, does not truly merit an increase of grace, eternal life and in case he dies in grace the attainment of eternal life itself and also increase in glory, let him be anathema.” The idea is you keep doing more works, more works, more works. You increase grace. God increases grace. You increase works and together you achieve a higher and higher rate of sanctification, which they call justification, until finally you have obtained eternal life. That’s what it says. “The attainment of eternal life.” If you don’t believe that you attain your eternal life by your works, you’re cursed.

Did Pope John Paul II believe that? Of course he believed that. Why? Because the church is infallible. Catholic theology can’t be amended because it’s infallible and he is the faithful guardian of that system. We should grieve for that man because he gained the whole world and lost his soul. The most loved and admired man by Catholics in the world, blinded by the prince of this world, never saw the light of the true gospel. I grieve for the many who are deceived by this Pope and his religion. It breaks my heart to see so many people in that system who can’t discern truth from error, genuine Christianity from its counterfeit. And my heart really breaks to hear from protestant evangelicals that this man was a true Christian, leading others to true Christianity.

The religious corruption of Rome has been on constant display for the whole world to see. Literally, the splendor and pageantry are extraordinary; people standing in long lines for hours to virtually worship a dead man with a rosary in his hand and a twisted crucifix by his side. One man said on the television, one Catholic bishop, “We prayed for him and now we’re going to pray to him,” meaningless repetition of prayers which are an abomination of God. Twenty-six years in that position, never knew the truth. And the princes underneath him in their purple and scarlet robes are disguised as angels of light along with him. The magnificence and grandeur of this corrupt religion

that has become so rich at the expense of people, at the impoverishing of people, as bewitched a gullible world. They preach another gospel. How can we not see that? And for any man to be called Holy Father and accept it – Jesus called God “Holy Father” in John 17 in his high priestly prayer. Jesus said, “Call no man Father as if any man is the source of spiritual life.” Call no man Father, yet the whole priesthood, they’re all called Father. Occasionally I’m even called Father, which is no small offense to me. He is called Holy Father. He has usurped the title intended for God. He’s called the head of the church. He’s usurped a title intended for Christ. He’s called the Vicar of Christ, vicar connected to the word vicarious – the one who stands in the place of Christ. And he has stolen that from the Holy Spirit. He has set himself in the place of God, he has set himself in the place of Christ and he has set himself in the place of the Holy Spirit and that is overstepping your bounds.

I don’t think Jesus or God the Father or the Holy Spirit would go to a meeting with Muslims, say they share a common spiritual bond and kiss the Koran. I’m reminded of Luke 16 where there is a rich man dressed in purple and fine linen living in splendor every day. He dies and he finds himself in Hades, tormented and begging for people to go back and warn them. I think the Pope is in that very situation. But what did he actually believe? What did he actually say, this Pope John Paul II, that was just buried? We know that he believed salvation was not in Christ alone, and there in is another gospel that damns. But let me ask the question what did he believe about Mary? “In Christ alone,” we heard it and we sang it. After the death of his mother when he was eight years old. Karol Wojtyła, that’s how you say his name – the Pope that died – after the death of his mother when he was eight he developed an intense devotion to Mary. When he became Pope in 1978 he formally rededicated himself and his whole pontificate to Mary. He traveled around the world making visits to numerous Marian shrines around the world so he could venerate her in the fashion that Catholic theology calls him to. That’s hyperdulia or a higher dulia or higher veneration than for angels.

An example of his preoccupation and devotion to Mary motivated thousands, if not millions, of Roman Catholics to make Mary the primary focus of their lives, the primary focus of their prayers. He had a papal crest that was developed and a simple coat of arms that in the middle was a huge M for Mary. When he died his coffin was decorated with a large M. His personal slogan, which he embroidered into all his papal robes in Latin, “Totus tuus ego sum, Maria,” – I am totally yours, Mary. “Totus tuus ego sum.” By the way, those are the opening words in his last will and testament, and in that will and testament after devoting himself to Mary he said, “I place this moment,” referring to the moment of his death, “in the hands of the mother of my master, totus tuus. In the same eternal hands I leave everything and everyone to whom I have been connected by my life and my vocation. In these hands I leave above all the church and also my nation and all of humanity.” He put his own life, the church and the whole world in the hands of Mary. That is ridiculous. That is ludicrous. He says, “Each of us has to keep in mind the prospect of death. I, too, take this into consideration constantly and trusting the decisive moment to the mother of Christ and of the church; to the mother of my hope.” That’s paganism. That would nauseate Mary if she knew

about it, and she doesn't. She never heard a prayer from anybody ever. Neither did any other saint.

In notes included in his will, John Paul II quoted the words of a former Polish cardinal, "Victory, when it comes will be a victory through Mary." And if you closely follow the preaching of this man, you can see that intense devotion to Mary in a message to the general audience in May of 1997. John Paul said, and I quote, "The history of Christian piety teaches that Mary is the way which leads to Christ." When the assassination attempt, if you remember, failed in 1981 I think it was, he credited Mary with saving his life. On the anniversaries of that assassination attempt in 1992 and 1994, he made a special pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in order to offer ceremonial prayers of thanksgiving to Mary.

He wrote a book. John Paul II's Book of Mary. The ad copy inside the book says the book is for people "who seek a deeper relationship with Jesus and his mother." The table of contents lists all the titles that the Pope applied to Mary: Gate of Heaven, Mediatrix of all Graces, Mirror of Perfection, Mother of the Church, Mother of Mercy, Pillar of Faiths, Seed of Wisdom. Let me just tell you what some of the things in the book say. I'm quoting here, "Mary shares our human condition but in complete openness to the grace of God. Not having known sin she is able to have compassion on every kind of weakness." Not having known sin. Why, then, in her magnificat did she call God her savior?

He says, "She understands a sinful man and loves him with a mother's love. Precisely for this reason she is on the side of truth and shares the church's burden in recalling always and to everyone the demands of morality." He says, "For every Christian, for every human being, Mary is the one who first believed. Precisely with her faith, as spouse and mother, she wishes to act upon all those who entrust themselves to her as her children. And it is well known that the more her children persevere and progress in this attitude, the nearer Mary leads them to the unsearchable riches of Christ." Again here's this whole life of effort and effort and you're trying to get to Christ and you can't. You're trying to get to Christ and it's hard to get to Christ and Christ is a tough guy, but he can't resist his mother, so you get to his mother and she gets on his case about you and you get in. That's it.

He says further, "According to the belief formulated in the Psalm documents of the church, the glory of grace referred to in Ephesians 1:6 is manifested in the mother of God, to the fact that she has been redeemed in a more sublime manner. As Christians raise their eyes with faith to Mary in the course of their early pilgrimage, they strive together to increase in holiness. Mary, the exalted daughter of Zion, helps all her children wherever they may be and whatever their condition to find in Christ the path to the Father's house." The Father's house is just really hard to find. Christ knows the way, but you can't get Christ's attention so you work on his mother and he can't resist her and that's how the whole deal works.

He further says, "Nobody else can bring us, as Mary can, into the divine and human dimension of the mystery of the gospel." Let me stop here and say Mary has nothing to do with the salvation of anybody. This pope wrote, "We can

turn to the blessed virgin trustfully imploring her aid in the awareness of the singular role entrusted to her by God, the role of cooperator in redemption, which she exercised throughout her life and in a special way at the foot of the cross." This new Pope, Benedict XVI, Ratzinger is his given name, in his first statement as Pope said, "I place the church and myself into the hands of Mary." Both of them make Mary responsible for everything. If you go to Catholic churches around the world – I've been to them all over the place – you'll see the paintings or the décor and at the top is always Mary; rarely ever God – the image of God – rarely ever Christ, almost always Mary.

What about the issue of salvation? How did Pope John Paul II view salvation, being an informed Catholic? Well, he was a modified universalist, okay, a modified universalist. He stopped short of saying plainly that he believed everybody in the world would eventually be in heaven, but he used the phrase universal salvation hundreds of times in his writings. And he often expressed uncertainty about whether any human being would ever go to hell. In a message to the general audience in July of 1999, the Pope said this, "This images of hell that sacred scripture presents to us must be correctly interpreted. They show the complete frustration and emptiness of life without God." So he transports hell into now and says hell is just a way to describe living your life now without God. "Rather than a place" – this is his book, this is what he said in his speech, "Rather than a place, hell indicates the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God who is the source of all life and joy." So hell is your life now without God.

"Eternal damnation remains a real possibility, but we're not granted, without special divine revelation, the knowledge of whether or which human beings are affectively involved in it." We have no idea who's going to go there. It is a possibility, but we have no idea who's going to go there. And then he said, this, "The thought of hell must not create anxiety or despair." Well, isn't that kind? That is so kind. And you know the devil would want to minimize hell, wouldn't he? Make it go away? In his encyclical titled *Redemptoris Mater*, the Pope said, "The eternal design of God the Father, his plan of man's salvation in Christ as a universal plan. Just as all are included in the creative work of God in the beginning, so all are eternally included in the divine plan of salvation." It sounds like universalism to me.

In a 1995 message he said, "Christ won universal salvation with the gift of his own life. For those, however, who have not received the gospel proclamation as I wrote in encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, salvation is accessible" – these are people who have never heard the gospel – "salvation is accessible in mysterious ways in as much as divine grace is granted to them by virtue of Christ's redeeming sacrifice, without external membership in the church. It is a mysterious relationship. It is mysterious for those who receive the grace because they do not know the church and sometimes even outwardly reject her."

Ah, so you don't know the church, you don't know the gospel, but in some mysterious way you get saved. There are evangelicals who have written books and said the very same thing. The Pope wrote, "Followers of other religions can receive God's grace and be saved by Christ apart from the ordinary means

which he has established.” From the same document about Redemptoris Missio, he says, “The redemption that brings salvation to all.” He says, “The Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing the paschal mystery in a manner known only to God. Salvation always remains a gift of the Holy Spirit. It requires man’s cooperation both to save himself and to save others.” So what you have is this: salvation by works in which you cooperate with God, but not necessarily knowing the gospel or knowing about Christ.

So he denies the exclusivity of salvation through Christ, affirms a universal kind of salvation by which people can get there by doing good in whatever way they know to do good. This is something else he says – it’s just amazing – “The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ.” Since salvation is offered to all it must be made concretely available to all, but it is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the gospel revelation or to enter the church. Since Christ died for everyone and since the ultimate calling of each of us comes from God and it’s there for a universal one, we are obliged to know that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this paschal mystery, again in a manner known only to God.

One of his best-known books is called Crossing the Threshold of Hope, an aggressive and ecumenical manifesto really. He said this: “The Muslims worship the one true God. Hinduism is another means of taking refuge in the one true God. Buddhists have God’s help in reaching true enlightenment.” He said that there is much that is holy and true in all false religions and even animism can prepare a person’s heart to receive the truth of Christ. Basically he said God helps every man create his own personal salvation by doing good, and the Holy Spirit, he said, operates in every religion. This is the message everybody would like to hear, right? Stay where you are and do your best.

You say how can he ever draw this conclusion out of scripture? It doesn’t come out of scripture. If you want to know what he believes about scripture, I’ll give you a little of it. John Paul II, like all Roman Catholics since the Council of Trent, flatly deny that scripture is supreme authority in all matters of faith, conduct and doctrine. The words of Vatican II, “The Roman Catholic Church does not draw her certainty about all revealed truth from the holy scriptures alone, but both scripture and tradition must be accepted and honored with equal feelings of devotion and reverence.” What it really comes down to is you deny what the scripture says, you twist and pervert what the scripture says, and you invent another religion based upon tradition.

The Catholic Church says tradition is equal to scripture and the Catholic Church determines what is tradition. He also says of the church that the popes determine the true meaning of scripture and they alone know the true meaning of scripture and the meaning that they determine to be the true meaning is infallible. So you have a man who claims to be the head of the church, the Vicar of Christ. He arrogates to himself an authority that belongs to God alone. He feels free to interpret scripture any way he wants to and it is infallible. And in the process, of course, abandons the plain sense of scripture that teaches Christ alone is the way to salvation by faith

alone.

Well enough about him. Let me just kind of conclude by looking at the papacy itself, because he's representative of it. He's not as deadly as some popes have been, not as immoral as some popes have been. He's a nobler soul, humanly speaking, than many. Let me just talk about what the papacy affirms for itself. I have a source for this, *The Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* by Ludwig Ott written in 1952 and into English translated in 1955. It's been a staple in my own understanding of Catholic theology for years. Here are statements of Catholic dogma from the primary source, "The Pope possesses full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the whole church, not merely in matters of faith and morals, but also in church discipline and the government of the church."

The Vatican Council declared, interpreting that, "If anyone shall say that the Roman pontiff has the office merely of inspection and direction and not a full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the universal church, not only in things which belong to faith and morals but also in those which relate to the discipline and government of the church spread throughout the world, or asserts that he possess merely the principal part and not the fullness of this supreme power, or that this power which he enjoys is not ordinary and immediate, both over each and all the churches and over each and all the pastors and the faithful, let him be anathema."

You question his authority in any sense and you're cursed. It's a mortal sin. He's unassailable. It goes on to say a true power, a universal power, a supreme power and a full power is possessed by any pope who can "rule independently on any matter without the consent of anyone else, he himself is judged by nobody because there is no higher judge on earth than he." He is the king of the earth. That's why the Vatican is its own nation, because he can't submit to any monarch. He is the king of the world. Further Catholic dogma says the Pope is infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra*. *Ex cathedra* is when he speaks out of his seat. When he speaks as Pope, he is infallible. Catholic dogma says, "God in heaven will confirm the Pope's judgment in his capacity as supreme doctor of the faith, he is preserved from error."

By the way, papal infallibility was voted in in 1870. That was convenient. It was voted in by a split vote. Interesting. They had to vote several times to finally get it through and it never was unanimous. John Paul II apologized for the historical failings of Catholics in a very vague way because when he was confronted with some of the issues of the past, some of the embarrassing things like forced conversion and anti-Semitism and some of the horrible things that were done, he apologized in a vague way. And you have to understand this. How can you apologize if you're infallible? How can an infallible church apologize? But listen to what they believe. They do not believe that the church consists in the laity. The church does not consist in the laity. The laity are the sons and daughters of the church, but the church is the Roman curia, the papal court of cardinals, bishops and priests. And when John Paul apologizes for the short failings of the Catholics, he is not meaning the infallible church that consists of the papacy and the curia. "They are not guilty, for they are always to be held as immaculate." The sins have been committed by the sons and daughters of the church who make up the

laity. This is absolutely ridiculous given the sexual perversion of the priesthood, which even Benedict XVI tried to sweep under the rug with a silly comment about the percentage of perverted priests – he wouldn't use that word – but the percentage of pedophile priests is no different than the normal population.

All of this is brushed under the carpet as fast as it can be in an effort to protect the illusion of holiness. Really it's hard to say whether the claim to infallibility is more ridiculous or more wicked – wicked because it attributes to man what belongs only to God, ridiculous because popes have been so wrong so often and because the whole system is so wrong. One might conclude that they are infallible when it comes to being wrong. Let me just conclude with three thoughts. 1. The papacy is unbiblical. It is unbiblical. There's not one tiny shred of evidence in scripture for the papacy nor is there any evidence for cardinals, bishops, priests, nuns. It's all an invention of men and demons to create an illusion of spirituality and an illusion of transcendentals. It was all developed by evil people Satanically led to create a false religion that would be the enemy of the truth. The appeal is because of the power, the prestige and the money.

Do they try to support the papacy from the Bible? Yes. Listen to this. Again, this is their theology from Ludwig Ott, The Fundamentals of Roman Dogma. "Christ appointed the apostle Peter to be the first of all the apostles and to be the visible head of the whole church by appointing him immediately and personally to the primacy of jurisdiction." What they do is go back and say Peter was the first pope appointed by Christ. "If," says the Vatican Council, "If anyone says" – this is back in 1823 – "If anyone says that he, the blessed apostle Peter, was not constituted by Christ our Lord, prince of all the apostles and visible head of the church militant, or that he directly Peter and immediately received from our Lord Jesus Christ the primacy of honor only and not one of true and proper jurisdiction, let him be anathema." If you deny the papacy of Peter, you are cursed. You are cursed. So if you say the Pope is not the successor of Peter, you are also cursed, says Ott.

Here's another test of biblical fidelity that the Roman Catholic system fails utterly. No student in the New Testament would deny that Peter was important. He is important; important apostle, leader, spokesman for the 12, at the top of all four lists of the 12 – he's always at the top. He was a spokesman. I wouldn't want to call him Holy Father or Holy anything. He was weak and selfish and sinful and cowardly and unfaithful. He may have been in Rome. He may have died in Rome, but there's no evidence. They say he went to Rome, was the pastor of a church in Rome, died in Rome, was buried in Rome. St. Peter's is supposed to be built where he was buried. There's no evidence for that at all. One thing is certain, he never pastured a church in Rome, if he ever went there. How do you know that? Well, Paul wrote Romans in the year 56 and made no reference to Peter. If Peter was in Rome there was already a church there. If Peter was the pastor of the church in Rome why doesn't he refer to Peter? He greets a whole bunch of people in chapter 16. He just keeps greeting one after another, after another, after another. It would be pretty serious to overlook Peter.

When Paul was later imprisoned in Rome in the year 60-62 he wrote four



letters and he included in those letters all who came to him. Never mentions Peter. In his last letter, 2 Timothy written in the year 64 or about that, he gives greeting to 10 people in Rome; not Peter. Not Peter. Galatians 2:7-8, you might want to look at that for just a minute. Galatians 2:7-8, "I have been entrusted," Paul says, "with the gospel to the uncircumcised" – to the gentiles – "just as Peter had been to the circumcised." Peter was never called to pastor a gentile congregation, to take the gospel to the gentiles. Never. Galatians chapter 2 talks about, verses 11 to 14, when Peter came to Antioch, Paul had to oppose him to his face because he stood condemned because of his terrible, terrible compromise. It was he who denied the Lord, as you know. It was he who disobeyed the Lord. It was he who was cowardly.

By the way, the head of the Jerusalem church – you might think at least Peter would be the head of the Jerusalem church, but he's not. According to Galatians chapter 2 and Acts chapter 15, the head of the Jerusalem church was James. It was James, not Peter at all. There's no indication whatsoever that Peter had anything to do with the city of Rome. In 1 Corinthians 1, the apostle Paul addresses the factions in the Corinthian church. He says, "Some of you say I am of Paul, Apollos, I am of Cephas or Peter and I of Christ." He doesn't sort Peter out. He doesn't make any great thing of him at all. In fact, he makes it very clear that none of these people are particularly significant. They're not the ones who deserve the credit for the work of God. Go to chapter 3, "What, then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants to whom you believe. I planted, Apollos watered, God was causing the growth." It's a very low-key way to treat yourself. He doesn't give any elevation to anybody. Furthermore, Paul went to Rome to preach and in Romans 15:20, he says, "I aspire to preach the gospel not where Christ was already named." If Peter had been there and planted a church then that would not be true. He didn't go where somebody else had been. Peter was already the bishop of Rome. Why would Paul want to go there and strengthen and establish that church?

In 1 Peter, let's hear it from Peter himself. 1 Peter 1, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." That's all; an apostle of Jesus Christ. He introduces himself as nothing more than that, not the apostle, not the head of the church. 1 Peter 5, "I exhort the elders among you as your fellow elder." As your fellow elder. I'm just one of you. I'm just a partaker of the glory to be revealed. Shepherd the flock of God. Exercise oversight not under compulsion but voluntarily according to the will of God. Not for money, but with eagerness. "Not as" – here it comes, verse 3 – "lording it over those allotted to your charge." Boy, there's a direct hit at the papacy. We're just fellow elders. Don't ever lord it over. Peter himself actually taught against the priesthood, which of course the papacy is the highest place. First Peter 2:5 he says, "You are living stones. You are to build up a spiritual house for a holy priesthood." This is what we know as the priesthood of believers. In verse 9, "You are a chosen race. You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." There's no priesthood but the priesthood of believers.

By the way, Peter completely disappears after Acts 15. Completely. But in spite of all of this, the Roman Catholic Church affirms that Peter was the first Pope, the head over the whole church, and the author of papal

succession. Where do they get it? They get it from three passages completely misrepresented, Matthew 16, and this one you know, "Jesus said, "I say to you you're Peter and on this rock I'll build my church." You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church. It's a play on words. He's not saying you are Peter and upon you'll build my church. You are Peter – petros. Petros, small stone. Upon this petra, rock bed, I will build my church. What rock bed? The rock bed of the reality of Christ. Simon Peter in verse 16, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the Living God." And Jesus says, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you. My father who is in heaven I say you are a small stone but it's on the rock bed of who I am that I will build my church."

How can that be perverted? The language is crystal clear. Verse 19 – they like this one – "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Wow, that sounds like authority. You get to open and shut. Whoever controls the door is in charge. You get to decide who comes in and who goes out. Isn't he saying that to Peter? Yes, because it was true of Peter, but he didn't just limit it to Peter. If you look at chapter 18 where you have the discipline section he says to anyway in verse 15, "If your brother sins go and reprove him in private. If he listens you've won your brother. If he doesn't listen take two or three witnesses. If he still doesn't listen, tell the church and if he still doesn't listen to the church put him out. Truly I say everybody, to all of you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Peter wasn't given any authority that every believer doesn't have. Same thing.

So what is this? It's the authority to say to someone your sins are forgiven or your sins are not forgiven based on what? Based upon whether they believe, whether they repent. If you have the right to say to someone you can enter the kingdom by how they respond to the gospel. You can say to someone you're loose from your sins because you put your trust in Christ. You can say to someone you're bound in your sin because you refuse Christ. You can say it as well as I can say it, Peter can say it, anyone can say it. We have that authority based upon how people respond. The Pope is wrong to say we don't know the mystery of who's going to be in heaven and who's going to be in hell. Yes we do. We have the authority to say you are inside the kingdom and you are outside. You are forgiven; you are not based upon the response to Christ.

They also use a second passage, Luke 22:31. Luke 22:31 where Jesus says, "Simon, behold Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat. I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail and once you have turned again strengthen your brothers." They say that is sort of a declaration of his papal primacy. Boy, that is some stretch. He says I'm turning you over to Satan and your faith isn't going to totally fail, but you're going to deny me "before the cock crows," he says in verse 34. But you're going to be restored. Strengthen your brother. So they say here is the great commission to be the ultimate, supreme strengthener, the Pope. Again ludicrous interpretation of that text.

The other one they use is John 21. John 21. I have to keep reminding people that they use the scripture but they don't need it because they can just invent doctrines. Verse 15, John 21, Jesus finishes breakfast and says to Peter, "Do you love me?" "Yes, Lord, you know I love you." "Tend my lambs." Then he says it again, "Shepherd my sheep." Then he says it again, "Tend my sheep." They say in this three-fold all of Peter he was made the supreme shepherd. No. In 1 Peter 5, I just read it to you. He said I'm nothing but a fellow elder under the chief shepherd. They say that from Peter on there's an unbroken chain of papal succession. That's absurd. The first person who was actually Pope was in the 6th century. And then they had to go back and pick, out people who could fill in the gaps back to Peter. I wish I had time to give you the history of the papacy. It is one ugly story. Just remember nobody was really an official pope until 600. Before that there were elements of the church, the institutional church – there were powerful elements of the church in Rome and Constantinople and other places, about five of these huge ones. It was a battle for power.

The bishop of Rome, because Rome was significant, wanted to be the head of everything and finally got his wish after a long and unhappy history. But there were periods of time when there was no bishop in Rome at all: 304-348, 638-640, 1085-86, 1241-43, 1267-71, 1292-1294, 1314-1316, 1415-1417 there weren't any. The point I'm making is there's no succession here. Certainly there's no divine succession. The papacy was bought and sold and bartered. It was invented, it was reinvented. At some points there was as many as three who all called themselves popes at the same time fighting for power. Alexander VI bought the papacy as an illustration. Having purchased enough votes, the majority was obtained when he voted for himself. In his days, the Vatican was the scenes, say historians, of frequent orgies, such as the banquet of chestnuts attended by 50 or more prostitutes who squirmed and crawled naked amidst lit candles to pick up chestnuts scattered on the floor and afterwards entertained the guests in carnal indulgence.

One historian says, "With Alexander VI, the papacy stood forth with all the strength of its emancipation from morality." The litany of licentiousness in the history of the papacy is staggering, absolutely staggering. Bought and sold, fought over, murdered for, multiple popes, conflicting lists of popes with different names, different numbers. If it wasn't so sad it would be like a joke. It wasn't really until Gregory the Great, 590-604, that there was a legitimate Pope. Supposedly from Peter on there was a succession. Falsified, forged documents were intended to prove that. So you can literally obliterate the papacy because there is no apostolic succession. The claim is ridiculous; absolutely ridiculous. It was just a big battle for power and then they wanted to establish that power. Once it got centered on the bishop of Rome and he became the Pope, he wanted to affirm and magnify his power and so he created the idea of succession and started filling in the gaps going back.

It is unbiblical. Secondly it is unholy. You can read it for yourself. You can read the history of the papacy. It's just horrific really. Terribly sinful and yet in The New Catholic Encyclopedia, claims the one receiving the sacrament, the Pope, and the ones who elect the Pope are to be characterized by "outstanding and habitual goodness of life, especially perfect chastity."

So the Pope is perfect and has to be chosen by perfect men. That's impossible, obviously. I would say this. That the papacy is the biggest hoax ever foisted on the world. The biggest hoax ever. Popes who were fornicators and bribers and murderers, and some who were good men in the human sense, dot the landscape of this history and make it impossible to see in it the work of God or any apostolic succession.

Well since my time is gone, let me just give you one other thought. It is unbiblical, it is unholy and it is arrogant and idolatrous. The Pope has the right to pronounce sentence of deposition against any sovereign on the planet, so says the papacy. That means the Pope is the king of the world. He can depose any king. The Catholic Encyclopedia says "We declare, we say, we define, we promise that every being should be subject to the Roman Pontiff." The Pope is the supreme judge, even of civil laws, and is incapable of being under any true obligation to them. He is above all law, he is above all kings. At the consecration of Roman Catholic bishops there is an oath of allegiance to the Pope; whenever a bishop is consecrated an oath of allegiance is given. Here's what it says: "With all my power I will persecute and make war on all heretics, schismatic's and those who rebel against our Lord the Pope and all his successors, so help me God and these holy gospels of God."

So you swear to make war on anybody who rebels against the Pope. Where is humility in this? Romanism is a gigantic system of church worship, sacrament worship, Mary worship, saint worship, image worship, relic worship, priest worship and Pope worship. J.C. Ryle was right when he said it's a huge, organized idolatry. A man wearing a gold crown triple-decked with jewels worth millions? A cardinal's garb that costs tens of thousands of dollars? Peter said, "Silver and gold have I? None." Paul said, "I coveted no man's gold, no man's silver, no man's clothing." "The Pope is surrounded by a dazzling display of arrogant overindulgence. Its theater is nothing more than theater to give the illusion of God, the illusion of transcendence, the illusion of spirituality. It is a pompous display of wealth. It is a lavish indulgence in ridiculous buildings with ridiculous robes, crowns and thrones to cover and mask a sinful system like the whitewashed tombs that Jesus referred to."

There was never such a thing as a papal coronation before the 10th century and now the world has gone berserk over this as if it was true religion. I said this a few weeks ago. I'm going through Luke. The more liturgy, the more mystery, the more ceremony, the more apostasy. The Pope is in direct violation of everything in scripture and sets himself up as the greatest person on earth. But then friends, it's not a bad guess to see the final antichrist as a pope. Colossians 1:18 speaks of Jesus Christ, "He is the head of the body of the church. He is the beginning. He is the first born from the dead so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything." Who gets first place in everything? Christ. Christ. Oh, they've got a clever system. How to preserve error, how to perpetuate error, make heresy infallible and the arch heretic unassailable, irreformable and absolutely authoritative. It is possible that the final antichrist could be a pope because the final antichrist will be a dominating world leader. He will be

not subject to any other world leader. He will be in an imitation of Christ, an antichrist, a pseudochrist. He will have international power. He will be a gentile. And his system seems, in the Book of Revelation chapter 17, to be headed up in Rome.

If the Pope can fool evangelicals, it seems to me that the antichrist won't have much trouble doing the same with the world. Well, let's leave it at that.

#### **Webnaster's comment**

Apparently John Fullerton MacArthur doesn't realize the Pope and the biblical antichrist are one and the same person! Most evangelicals today have been deceived to think that the Antichrist is a single individual who will arise from obscurity in the *future*, and *only* in the future!. This way of interpretation of Scripture is known as *futurism*. Protestants up till the 18th century did not hold such a view of a future only Endtime Antichrist. For more information, please see [The Antichrist Is Hidden In Plain Sight](#)