

Counterfeit Christianity



Protestant Rick Warren goes out of his way to meet the Pope

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BECAUSE TWO THINGS outwardly look alike is no proof that they are identical. For one of the oldest tricks known to man is by false appearance to make a worthless thing look genuine. **Often, in fact, the greater the apparent similarity, the greater the real difference beneath the surface.** Despite a perfect likeness, counterfeit money hasn’t even one cent of real value.

It should not be surprising then to find that men have counterfeited the religion of Jesus Christ to make it serve the evil ends of arbitrary power and oppression. Obviously evil would not be accepted, were it to appear as evil; it is therefore disguised as good. Falsehood would be rejected if it were not made to look like the truth. No one would deal with the devil as such; accordingly he takes on the appearance of his direct opposite – of God himself. To discover those who destroy true Christian teaching, you must look behind the banner of Christ they brazenly flourish. In this way **you can expect to find the Antichrist usurping the place of Christ** and appearing as the leader of all Christian people. He will naturally give the impression of being entirely for, not against Christ; for “anti,” the prefix in his name, means ‘taking the place of,’ or ‘usurping’ – that is, he appears as the ‘vicar’ of Christ.

Judged by this test the Church of Rome can be seen in its true light. It puts a pope in the place of Christ, and substitutes his dictatorial word for the Word of God. **It emphasizes Mary for Jesus**, and a dead image on a crucifix for a living, triumphant Saviour in the hearts of men. In the words of Cardinal Newman: “It substitutes external ritual for moral obedience, penance for penitence, confession for sorrow, profession for faith, the lips for the heart.” Its ‘Vicar of Christ’ wears a triple crown, flaunts proud titles and surrounds himself with the trappings of the Roman Caesars, dispenses Christian justice by the law code of pagan Rome, rushes to ally himself with oppressors of the people, depends on politics rather than prayer.

How best to expose this counterfeit of Christianity is the problem that I have worked on for the past ten years as director of Christ's Mission in New York and editor of *The Converted Catholic Magazine*. We live in an age of extreme tolerance as far as religious beliefs are concerned, and since my conversion I have become a citizen of the United States which has risked its very existence, the lives of its young men and spent astronomical amounts of its money in two world wars in the fight for the preservation of the right of everyone to find, to teach and believe about God and salvation according to the dictates of his own conscience. All the hopes and aspirations of this great democratic nation are irrevocably tied to defense of these principles of freedom – religious, political and social.

For this reason, there are many who are opposed to anything being said or done against any Church or religious organization, no matter how corrupt it may be. Others say that in criticizing or taking any action against a corrupt religious organization such as the Roman Catholic Church we should be always 'constructive,' never 'destructive' in our methods. They speak as if nothing is ever so bad that it could not be set right again by the application of certain correctives and palliatives, by a few patches here and there, and a new coat of paint to make it look brand new again.

Yet it would be both foolish and dangerous to patch up in this way, and paint a house or other building that is decayed from its very foundations. Jesus Christ warned against the uselessness of putting a new patch on an old worn-out garment, and against the danger of putting new wine into old bottles. Both the new and the old suffer destruction in the end. Often those who want only 'constructive' criticism of an institution do not want any criticism at all. Totally destructive criticism is necessary if the occasion calls for it. How, for instance, can one be 'constructively' critical of the devil and his works?

It is well to remember God's commission to the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 1:10): "I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, to overthrow and to destroy, to build and to plant." Here God's order is to do six things, the first four of which are destructive – to root out, pull down, overthrow and destroy – and then – to build and to plant.

I have come to the conclusion that this 'destructive' method is necessary when occasions call for it, in the case of decayed religious institutions as well as of decayed buildings. In order for the seed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to take root in the hearts of men, they must first be purged and cleansed of all the superstitious, pagan teachings with which they have been poisoned by the false teachings and practices of the Roman Church. A strong spiritual emetic is needed for this purpose.

In collaboration with others at Christ's Mission who have also been converted from the Roman Catholic priesthood, I have in these past ten years tried to make up for "the years that the locust hath eaten," when I blindly taught the errors I now fight against. I have done so in a fair, factual and objective manner, and in a spirit of love toward the Roman Catholic people who are of my own household. The spiritual emetic (an agent that induces vomiting) that

we offer them is strong, so strong that it makes many sick before it makes them well. That emetic is the full and unabridged Gospel message of salvation through personal acceptance of Jesus Christ.

I realize how difficult it is for Roman Catholics to accept and believe this true Christian message of salvation. It cannot be forcibly thrust upon them. It is such strong meat for them that they often will vomit it back immediately. It seems too terrifying for them to believe all at once that their powerful and grandiose Church organization that has lasted all through the centuries could be false or deceptive. Protestant teaching about salvation, they say, is too simple, too negative; it has no signs of power; it does nothing to act upon you by means of ritual or priestly ministrations. It is a sin of presumption, they say, to believe that God will save you completely in one life, and piously and humbly say they are not worthy to enter heaven immediately after they die. They are fearful of throwing away the useless burden of superstitious beliefs in the mediatorship of Mary, the saints and their devotions and images and, trusting entirely in the sacrifice of Christ once offered, follow boldly after him entirely naked of these pagan practices and beliefs foisted upon them by a power-seeking priesthood.

Many think us enemies of God, betrayers of Jesus Christ as Judas was. The character of the ex-priest has been so blackened by calumnies since Luther's time, that the unsuspecting Catholic people, if they allow their minds at all to admit that priests do leave the Church, unconsciously look upon us as completely lost souls working in the devil's behalf. Yet tens of thousands of Roman Catholic people leave the Roman Catholic Church each year and affiliate with the Protestant denominations. Several hundred former priests have been helped, both spiritually and economically, through Christ's Mission since its founding in 1879 by Father James A. O'Connor.

I am convinced that there are only two courses open to the Roman Catholic Church: either a thorough reform of itself from within, or total disruption from without. In helping both, I consider my present work constructively advantageous not only in the cause of Christ, but in the spiritual interests of my former Roman Catholic people.