

The Popes of Rome

by Ronald Cooke

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Introduction

In this short study the lives of various popes are briefly discussed. The reason for this study is because certain evangelical and fundamental spokesmen have come forward to praise the papacy since the advent of Vatican II and Pope John XXIII, (or XXIV, as the case may be).

The popes of Rome are now considered wonderful charismatic spiritual leaders of the entire world community. There is even talk of moving the See of Rome to Jerusalem so that a future pope may oversee and solve the problems in Israel and the Middle East.

The last few popes have been praised not only by Roman Catholics and other religious leaders, but by evangelical and fundamental Protestants. Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell, Jack Van Impe, Pat Robertson, and James Robison all sing the praises of the papacy today.

Does the papacy deserve such praise? Is the papacy worthy of the adulation heaped upon it by such men? Let the historical record answer these questions.

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An Important Issue

When one raises questions about the lives of some of the wicked popes of Rome, the response usually comes back that it is true there were some wicked popes but that was back in early times and in the Middle Ages, in modern times the papacy cleaned up its act. Modern popes, it is claimed, have not been monsters of iniquity as their predecessors were.

This, of course, is small comfort to the truth seeker. For then such a response ADMITS that for more than a thousand years the popes of Rome for the most part were very evil men. Meaning that many men, who CLAIMED to be the Vicar of Christ on earth, the Lord of the Earth, Supreme Ruler of Mankind, were engaged in the worst of crimes against humanity, while at the same time making such preposterous and blasphemous claims.

So how could such an office have any thing to do with Christ when such monsters obviously occupied it many times down through church history? If the office was truly from God and was truly occupied by the very representative of Christ on earth then it admits of NO EXCEPTIONS. Such men are either the Vicar of Christ or they are not. It is obvious that they are NOT!

Again, people say, why bother with such things? Why dredge up the past? Let sleeping dogs lie. The answer is that modern evangelical spokesmen have brought the issue to the fore by praising the popes of Rome, as not only Christian, but as the greatest spiritual leaders in the world today. When evangelical and self-professed fundamental leaders praise the popes of Rome they put the camps they represent on notice: either they are going to accept what the spokesmen say or reject what they say. So far we have seen very little rejection of these statements.

So if this study accomplishes no more than to separate me from such spokesmen it will be well worth the labor expended. I do not want to be identified with anyone who praises the Roman Antichrist and calls him a great spiritual leader of men in the world today!

It is true that few seem to care about truth today. The debacle of the impeachment of the President of the United States underscores this attitude toward the truth only too well. The majority of Americans, it is claimed by those who keep

statistics, are more interested in the economy than in truth.

Nevertheless the truth must be presented whether the majority are interested in it or not. The truth of Christ must be presented in the face of Antichrist. God's servants are not guaranteed to get much of a hearing in this world. Still the voice must cry in the wilderness of carnal security, and material prosperity, and antichristianity,

In the Scriptures the voice asks the question: "What shall I cry? And the answer was: "All flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withers; the flower fades; because the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it: surely the PEOPLE IS GRASS. The grass withers, the flower fades: BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD SHALL STAND FOREVER!

The Word of the Lord states CATEGORICALLY: "But this MAN after He had offered ONE SACRIFICE for sins FOREVER, SAT DOWN on the right hand of God (Heb. 10:12). Christ put an end to all masses and to the Roman priesthood. As Dr. Ian Paisley put it so well: "God has sacked every priest that Rome ever ordained."¹

So whether anyone listens or not the voice still must cry out in the wilderness of this world. The Word of the Lord shall stand and the refuge of lies shall be swept away whether people are interested in the truth or not. God always has a remnant that are interested in the truth, and God ALWAYS has the LAST word whether men pay any attention or not.

For centuries after the Reformation there was a definite Protestant heritage that understood the evils of the papacy. That heritage slowly but surely has been eroded away by a weak and compromising spirit. But even apart from the weakness there has been a definite attempt by the papacy to DESTROY the Reformation heritage.

This effort has been going on for centuries and it is still going strong as of this writing. The effort has as its focal point the issue of the identity of Antichrist.

At the Council of Trent the Roman Catholic Church sought to rid the papacy of the stigma of Antichrist. All the Dissenters of pre-Reformation history, and all the Reformers without exception identified the papacy with Antichrist. So Rome, since the days of Joachim of Flores around AD 1190, has been working to remove

the stigma of Antichrist from the papacy.

The Jesuits spearheaded the attack on Reformation Protestantism. One of the first things the Jesuits did was to put forth two new ideas of Antichrist. Francisco Ribera, a Jesuit priest put forth his idea of an evil man who would appear at the very end times and be the antichrist. Alcasar, a Spanish Jesuit put forth the Preterist idea of Antichrist, teaching that Antichrist rose and fell in the first century before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The amazing thing about these two views is that they are now the views of almost every PROTESTANT in the world today! The two Jesuit-originated ideas of the Antichrist are taught by almost every Bible-believing Protestant in the world today.

(I have had people say to me that the Jesuits now have very little impact upon Protestantism. This may be true, but if it is, the reason is easily seen: Protestants now promote the Jesuit's ideas for them, so the Jesuits do not need to be active in Protestant circles today except as ecumenical spokesmen.)

On one side the Reconstructionists all promote the Jesuit Alcasar's idea of an Antichrist limited only to the first century of the church. On the other side the rest of Protestantism, with the exception of a very small minority, promote the Jesuit Ribera's view of antichrist limited only to the very end of the age. The Reformers' view that Antichrist was past, present, and future, and tied into the papacy, has been almost completely discarded.

For two hundred years after the Reformation the Reformers' view of Antichrist held its own. Then various spokesmen within the confines of Protestant Anglicanism began to call for unity with Rome. The Tractarians launched an all out effort to return Anglicanism to the fold of Rome, and in so doing REJECTED the Reformers' view that Rome was Antichrist. In other words, the first move toward modern ecumenism had to deal with the issue of Antichrist. Certainly, no one in his right mind is going to call for unity with Antichrist. So one of the very first tasks of the ecumenists was to lift the stigma of Antichrist from Rome.

Since that time the move has gained great momentum. Now it is not only Anglicans who are praising the papacy as Christian, but Baptists, Presbyterians, and other self-professed Bible-believing Christians who are joining the chorus. So that at this very hour the papacy is not only being hailed as Christian, but

the pope is called one of the greatest spiritual leaders of the world!

The speed up of the news media has also contributed to the growth in popularity of the papacy. At the turn of this century the pope was only a little-known Italian prelate out side of Italy and Ireland.

In just a few short years the pope of Rome has gone from being a virtual nobody in the modern world to the best known man in the world and the man who is now looked upon as and the leader of leaders. Ethelbert Bullinger, who believed that Mystery Babylon referred to a rebuilt Babylon in the Middle East, said,

It is not my wish in any degree to minimize the awful abominations of Romanism. We see in it one of the most filthy of all streams that have flowed from Babylon; but we do try to rise above a "Local Board" when we are dealing with God's account of how He is going to close His great controversy with Jew and Gentile.²

So when Bullinger wrote about 100 years ago he felt that the Papacy was little more than the local board as far as the end-times were concerned. It is true that the Pope was considered an anachronism back then in Britain and America. But times have obviously changed dramatically and the Pope has gone from an unknown chairman of the board to the most visible man in the world.

Bullinger never lived to see the Treaty of Rome signed. He never lived to see a common currency come into vogue in Europe. He never lived to see the United States (which in his day was the most powerful Protestant nation on earth) become a total lackey of the Vatican. He never lived to see the advent of television which now enables the blasphemy of the mass to be beamed into two billion homes at the same time. He never lived to see the pope of Rome become the best known man in the world.

The popes of Rome keeping claiming the world as their domain, they keep pushing themselves into the limelight, seeking to become the cynosure of all peoples. So they need to be closely examined as to their self-professed credentials.

When one looks at the lives of some of these men who claimed, and still claim, to be the Vicar of Christ on earth, he sees a ghastly array of egregious evils both moral and spiritual, which cannot be matched by any other group of men, or by any other organization, in the annals of history. Other men and organizations have committed great evils, but never on such a wide scale and never for such a long time.

The evils are compounded by the fact that the popes of Rome not only claimed to be "Christian" but to be the leader of all Christians in the world, and the personal representative of Christ on earth. When the lives and teachings of the popes are examined it will be seen by any impartial observer, that some of the most wicked men who have ever lived on this planet were popes of Rome. Their lives and teachings mark them out as the representatives of evil rather than the representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The popes surpassed Nero and Caligula in crimes and sins. Because of their positions and their claims, they were far more evil than the most evil of the Roman Emperors. The very ideas of morality and honesty were vitiated by the monsters who sat in the papal chair. Even Bellarmine the great defender of Romanism wrote about the time preceding the Protestant Reformation:

there was no strictness in spiritual courts, no chastity in manners, no reverence in presence of what was sacred, no scholarship, in short almost no religion.³

And yet all these men up to this time of Bellarmine's writing for the past fifteen hundred years CLAIMED TO BE THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CHRIST ON EARTH! During all these centuries impunity was sold to the living for a price; and deliverance even from death and purgatory could be obtained for the right amount of money.

Farrar wrote,

A priesthood calling itself the Church -- a priesthood whose vices were the complaint of the theologian and the motive of the novelist, the despair of the good and the execration of

the multitude -- claimed absolute authority over men's bodies and souls. . . made it easier for the rich than for the poor to escape damnation and gave even to the grace of God the aspect of capricious concession to the purchased intercessions of the Virgin Mary.⁴

Farrar elaborated:

The name of faith was prostituted by being bestowed on the abject acceptance of unproved postulates; the name of morals was conferred upon blind obedience to human traditions; the name of grace was confined to the mechanical operation of perverted sacraments; the name of truth to a mass of infallible falsehoods; the name of orthodoxy to the passive repetition of traditional ignorance. The results were frightful. There was mental coercion and moral disorder.⁵

Farrar then asked the following series of questions?

How could Rome be respected when the world saw such pontiffs as Sixtus IV., Innocent VIII., Alexander VI., Julius II., and Clement VII.? How could the world tolerate on the lips of simonists, nepotists, adulterers, and worse, the claim to absolute dominion over religion, the claim to be the sole interpreters of Scripture, and the immediate recipients of the power and authority of Christ?⁶

Dean Fredric W. Farrar was certainly no ranting fanatic. He held the high and honored position of Dean of Canterbury, and Chaplain to Queen Victoria, and also chaplain of the House of Commons. Yet even this highly respected and mild mannered Anglican scholar, at the turn of this century, blasted in no uncertain terms the wickedness of the popes of Rome. This is why it is nothing short of incredible, that evangelicals and self-professed fundamentalists, in such a short time should now be praising the very men that Farrar so rightly condemned.

The difference is that Farrar studied and knew church history, while the men of today who are called great prophetic scholars seem to be almost totally ignorant of church history. An ignorance of church history is almost universal today. Yet

prophecy cannot be understood apart from history. Perhaps the church could use some historical speakers today to help counteract the ignorant prophetic speakers which are everywhere in this generation.

Men speak of a future-only Antichrist while ignoring totally the historical Antichrist. In so doing they have invented the best of all possible opponents. In fact, it would be impossible to invent a nicer opponent. For the future-only Antichrist has NEVER affected anyone in ALL of church history, He is NOT NOW affecting anyone, and he NEVER WILL affect any Christian, because all Christians will be gone before he can even appear! When he does appear he will attack only Jews. And even at that he will only do so for three and a half years!

So a nicer opponent would indeed be difficult to invent. According to this Jesuit idea the future-only Antichrist may be a hideous monster capable of every evil imaginable and with the power to carry it out, but he NEVER EVER does anything to any Christian.

The Albigenes, the Waldenses, the Hussites, the Lollards ALL thought they were being persecuted and destroyed by the Antichrist. The Protestant Reformers all thought likewise.

It has taken several hundred years to remove the stigma of Antichrist from the Papacy that was laid upon her by all the Dissenters of church history before the Reformation, and by all the Reformers and those who followed them for two centuries after the Reformation. The Jesuit's two views of Antichrist now rule practically all Bible-believers' eschatology. A remarkable triumph of Jesuit casuistry!

While multitudes of Christians now follow the Jesuits, the work of Antichrist proceeds on every side. The neutralized wonder boys of modern Protestantism ignore the inroads of Romanism while warning about a future monster who harms nobody NOW. They totally ignore the work of the present Antichrist while warning everyone about a future Antichrist who will never affect one Christian if their eschatology is correct. It is a remarkable achievement of the Jesuits. No wonder modern "Christianity" is in such a pathetic state as the church approaches the end of the second millennium.

When ungodly men claim to be the Lord of the Earth, the Supreme Ruler of mankind, the Vicar of Christ, such claims mark

them out as vicious sinners and blasphemers above the rank of ordinary cutthroats and apostates who never made such ungodly and blasphemous claims.

The following popes made the most blasphemous claims concerning their own persons while living lives that would have embarrassed ordinary sinners. They cannot be dismissed as if they never existed. THESE MEN LIVED! WHAT IS MORE, THEY LIVED AS THE POPES OF ROME! THEY WERE THE HEAD OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC "CHURCH." THEY WIELDED ALL THE HORRIBLE POWERS THAT WENT WITH THAT POSITION. THEY STAND, ACCORDING TO ROMAN CATHOLIC WRITERS AND SCHOLARS, IN THE LONG CHRONOLOGICAL LINE OF THE POPES, AND YET THEY WERE SOME OF THE WORST MISCREANTS WHO EVER CURSED THE WORLD WITH THEIR PRESENCE!

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Some of the Early Popes

Various Biographical Glimpses of the Popes of Rome

Pope Damasus I

Malachi Martin, who is a Roman Catholic writer, gives us a glimpse into the early days of the papacy:

At the election of Pope Damasus I in AD 366, thirty seven corpses littered the environs of the Liberian Basilica after a fracas between the followers of Damasus and his archrival Ursinus.¹

Malachi Martin also recounts the actions of Pope Stephen who had his archrival brought before him with broken knee-caps, (the IRA practiced the same cruelty) and had him whipped and his eyes carved out. He then elaborates:

Within a year Pope Stephen will have used Duke Desiderius to get Christophorus, Sergius, and Gratosus imprisoned, first their eyes cut out, then their lives ended. He will then turn on Desiderius and by December of 771 will encompass his ruin and death.²

Martin again:

The high point of Marozia's career came at the end of her very long life when she was visited in her Roman prison by an emperor who had just seized possession of the city --Otto III, a successor of Charlemagne. He had only one reason for visiting Marozia -- to lay eyes on the woman who was the mother of a pope, whom she had conceived by another pope, and who was the aunt of a third pope, the grandmother of a fourth pope, and with the help of her own mother, the creator of nine popes in eight years, of whom two had been strangled, one suffocated with a cushion, and four deposed and disposed of in circumstances that have never come to public light.³

The catalogue of evil associated with the various popes can not be matched by any other organization in the history of man. Here are a few more examples of men who claimed to be the Vicar of Christ in the early years of church history.

Formosus I - ? - 896

The story of Formosus is one of the most bizarre tales of the papacy. He was installed as pope in AD 891 and reigned for five years. He tried to take Spoleto by force at the head of an army but died of a stroke on the way or may have been poisoned. He was buried in AD 896 in Rome.

When Pope Stephen VII, a man who was insane and subject to violent outbreaks, was installed as pope he at the instigation of Agiltruda had his rotten corpse dug up. Martin relates the rest of this story.

Formosus had been dead and buried for over eleven months. On Agiltruda's suggestion, Pope Stephen had the rotting corpse dug up, and brought to the Lateran Palace, clothed in pontifical vestments, placed sitting on a papal throne, and then tried for capital crimes by Stephen and his cardinals and bishops. This was the famous Corpse Synod...

Pope Stephen himself and a papal accuser cross-questioned the rotting corpse (a trembling eighteen year old deacon stood beside the corpse and answered for the voiceless Formosus). . . At the crucial confession, Cardinals Sergius, Benedict, Paschalis, Leo, John, and the others rushed on the corpse, ripped the pontifical vestments from it, tore off the first three fingers of the right hand (Formosus, like every pope, gave the papal blessing with those three fingers), and then dragged the corpse from the hall.

Marozia was there as the cardinals and clergy dragged the corpse out of the palace and along the streets. The shouts of the crowd, the smell of putrefying flesh, the stones and the mud she and the others threw at the corpse did not let up at all. And then there was the dull splash as they threw the remains of Formosus into the River Tiber.⁴

This is the pope who was a former gang member who carried on various affairs with his mother, his sister, and his father's mistress. He had many mistresses and one called Joan. Since she exercised such control over him at one point, she in effect was pope. Others claim that there was an actual woman pope called Pope Joan. There certainly seems to be some authority for such a claim.

John it is claimed made a pact with the Devil and was charged with open Devil worship. But in answer to the charges John threatened the group of cardinals with excommunication, He was caught in the act of adultery by an irate husband who beat him to death with a hammer. He was then all of 27 years old.

Before his death John was also charged with the crimes of murder, adultery, and perjury, before a council convened by Otho I. He was summoned to appear but the "Vicar of Christ" refused. He was deposed Dec. 4, 964. Leo VIII was declared his successor. John merely came to Rome later and declared the other council null and void and reinstated himself. Otho I then prepared to march on Rome again and deal with John once and for all. But he died some say of apoplexy while engaged in an "adulterous intrigue."⁵ Others maintain he was dispatched by an angry husband.

Boniface VII-?-985

He is not considered a legitimate Pope by some but his name appears in the list of popes given in some chronological tables. He was Cardinal Francone before changing his name to Boniface the VII. He was elected in a riot which followed the strangling of Benedict VI in 974. ⁶ He was deposed a year later because of his licentiousness and cruelty. However, he was able to return to Rome in 985 and had enough power to put pope John XIV in prison where he died of starvation. When Boniface VII died his corpse was not shown any dignity and treated with disdain and disrespect.

Martin writes of this period of church history as follows:

Each of the succeeding popes from Leo III to Boniface VI (896) were elected in a tortuous fashion. The Roman factions battled among themselves and with the ordinary people. A candidate emerged from these always rough, frequently bloody, often fatal encounters between the various contending parties who used money as well as arms and sexual subversion to enforce their wishes.⁷

The men who claimed to be the Vicar of Christ, at this juncture of history, were men who used bloody and fatal encounters to come to the papal throne and attempt to hold it against their opponents. In other words, MURDER was an acceptable weapon to gain the papal throne and wield power as the "Vicar of Christ" on earth!

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4. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.
5. McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. IV, Baker Book House, Reprint, Grand Rapids, MI, 1981, p. 980.
6. *Op.cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 849.
7. Martin, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

The Popes of the Middle Ages

Pope John XIX or XX - ? -1034

The history and chronology of the popes is obscure in the tenth and eleventh centuries. So many were deposed, then reclaimed, or attempted to reclaim the papacy, while others were killed, that it is difficult to know for sure just where some of them are to be placed in the chronology.

John XX, who was the son of Count Gregory of Tuscany, procured the papal throne by violence and bribery, after the death of his brother Benedict VIII.¹ This John was considered to be imbecilic by those who disliked him, and he practiced simony constantly throughout his ten year reign.

It is said of him that he was so engrossed in the pursuit of money, for religious placements, that he came near to disposing of the Roman supremacy over the whole Eastern Church, at that time, for some pecuniary remuneration.² In other words he would sell any office for money with scarcely a second thought.

Clement II - ? - 1047

Clement died suddenly and some writers believe he was poisoned. Poison seems to be one of the more common ways in which popes were removed from office during the Middle Ages.

Clement was the first German pope and was installed through the power of the Emperor Henry III. He tried to use the power of the papacy to crush his enemies. He put the city of Benevento under the Interdict. But he did not have much time to inflict his wrath upon those who opposed him, for he died on Oct. 9, 1047 after just being installed on Dec. 25, 1046. So he did not last a year in office giving rise to the suspicion of poison causing his untimely end.

Clement was installed as a replacement of Benedict IX who was one of the worst of the popes. Since he was able to reclaim the papal chair after the death of Clement II, he may well have had him dispatched to render the papal throne vacant.

Benedict IX 1021 -1054

Benedict IX was known as the "boy" pope, and one of the worst monsters ever to sit upon the papal throne.³ He engaged in ceaseless immorality and was deposed at least three times from the papal chair by his opponents.

In AD 1045 he asked to be deposed from the papacy that he could marry an Italian princess who was also his cousin. Johannes Gratianus was installed in his place after he bought him out with a large sum of money. So he, in essence, sold the papal chair for money.

Silvester III had already replaced him earlier. So there were now three popes all living at the same time. Rome, during this time, was filled with brawls and murders.

The German King, Henry the Black, called for a general council to try to remedy the situation. Clement II was then installed as pope by the council. However, he died within a few months of his installation and Benedict came back to the papacy for the third time. He held office until AD 1048 when he was deposed again and this time it proved to be final. He died in AD 1054 a profligate to the end of his young life.

Innocent III 1161-1216

This particular Innocent has been praised by some evangelicals in recent years as one of the greatest Christians of church history. So it is important then to look at some of his major achievements.

Almost from the very start of his pontificate he sought to make the Roman See the throne of a world dictatorship. "Universal Supremacy" for the See of Rome and the pope of Rome was his never ending pursuit. He managed to make the papacy the temporal ruler of most of the civilized world, as well as its spiritual dictator.

He worked incessantly to bring the entire world to his feet and under his personal control. When the imperial throne became vacant he had a prefect appointed whom he made to swear allegiance to himself. He was able to expel Conrad, and Marcualdus, and to take over their provinces in the name of the

Roman See. He put himself in as regent when the king of Sicily died so that he was able to control that kingdom also.

He also was able to get various important cities such as Tuscany and Pisa to throw off their allegiance to the empire and come under his jurisdiction. It was this occasion which called forth one of the famous letters of Innocent III.

He wrote,

As God has created two luminaries, one superior for the day, and the other inferior for the night, which last owes its splendor entirely to the first, so He has disposed that the regal dignity should be but a reflection of the splendor of the papal authority, and entirely subordinate to it.

It was in the affairs of Germany that Innocent manifested the greatness of the papal power over the world of that time. Otho and Philip were in a contest for the imperial crown. Innocent decided in favor of Otho and excommunicated Philip. Philip fought back but was assassinated. Innocent's triumph in Germany was thus complete and Otho became a vassal of the pope.

Otho tried later to rebel against the authority of the papacy and was himself then excommunicated and Innocent's hand picked successor put in his place. So Innocent had shown the world that he controlled Germany and the empire by making his own man the new emperor.

He was able to excommunicate some of the most powerful men in the world and they were powerless to act against him. He was also able to put various countries under the papal interdict and they had to submit to him and the papacy before the formidable ban could be lifted.

He constantly claimed that he was head of a papal theocracy and that the Pope was the Vicegerent of God on earth. He also said that he was "intrusted by St. Peter (to govern) not only the whole church, but the whole world."⁵

Next to God, he was to be so honored by princes that their claim to rule was lost if they failed to serve him."⁶ In short all the prerogatives which had once been attached to the emperors were wrested from them, and transferred, with additions, to the popes.⁷

Innocent was one of the greatest persecutors of true believers who ever lived. To him, every heresy was a rebellion which it was his duty to repress and extirpate. So when the Albigenses refused to take the oath of allegiance to the papacy, Innocent sent two papal legates to root out and put an end to such heresy. The two legates were given the title of Inquisitors.

One of them, Castelman, was a cruel and severe persecutor who was murdered near Toulouse. When Innocent heard that his Inquisitor had been so rudely treated he ordered a crusade against the Albigenses in that whole territory in order to uphold his idea of an ideal "Christian" republic.

He addressed himself to all the faithful Roman Catholics exhorting them to fight against the old serpent and promising them the kingdom of heaven as a reward. He sent two legates to accompany the crusade and to report back to Rome as to its success. The report by the legate Arnaldus speaks of the taking of the city of Beziers in which the massacre of 30,000 men, women, and children took place. Zoe Oldenbourg, a modern writer recounts in details the horror of this massacre in her book *Massacre at Montsegur*.

She also gives us an insight into the character of Innocent III.

In November 1215 the Pope's Ecumenical Council was at last assembled as the Fourth Council of the Lateran. It was a veritable international conference, and had entailed upward of two years' preparation... the problem of heresy, and the means by which it was to be fought, possessed a burning immediacy. It was to defend the Church against this danger that the Council established its definitions of the (Roman) Catholic faith and of orthodoxy. Heretics, whether Cathars or Waldensians... were unconditionally condemned and anathematized...

Those temporal rulers who failed in this duty would be stripped of their rights by the Pope; he would be free to bestow their domains upon any Catholic seigneur that desired them. The Council could have hardly underwritten the work of the Crusade more explicitly (this was the crusade in which the massacre at Beziers had occurred) or defined the Church's theocratic attitude with greater clarity. The

Pope might not command the actual battalions to unseat kings; but through the decision of the Council he had arrogated to himself the legal right to do so -- thus proclaiming the Church's absolute supremacy over secular law.⁸

Innocent wanted to rule the world. Anyone who stood in his evil way was to be annihilated and those who did the annihilation would be generously rewarded for their trouble. The fact that he went to such pains for two years to prepare for an ecumenical council with the desired object of eradicating heretics shows just how determined he was to crush any dissenter from the See of Rome.

Innocent also used the powerful weapon of the papal Interdict against France and England. The Interdicts varied with different popes but the main issue usually was the cancellation of all public worship. When this happened in the middle ages it usually created a great impression and brought the person who had incurred the interdict, such as the king, into great disrepute and weakened his position as ruler of the country.

With the dawning of modern intelligence just around the corner, and beginning to raise its head, Innocent went to great lengths to stop it. He created the Mendicant Orders with the express purpose of stopping and purifying the church from the "spirit of modern independence and modern intelligence."

He also wrote letters to the Emperor Alextus with the view of inducing him to acknowledge the See of Rome and thus bring the whole eastern Empire under the papacy. So he constantly strove to bring the entire world to the foot of the pope of Rome. McClintock and Strong note that "His pontificate may be fairly considered to have been the period of the highest power of the Roman See."⁹

Nicholas III-?-1280

His name was John Cajetanus and he was born into a noble family. He took the name Nicholas when he became pope. He is known in papal history as Nicholas the Accomplished, because he had a lot of ability. However, he was one of the

most ambitious popes who ever sat in the papal chair. His ambition was his undoing. He is known in history as a Nepotist. He worked to bring large sums of money to Rome to build splendid palaces and used his relatives to discharge many duties of his pontificate. They were merely interested in enriching themselves and their families.

One of the sources of his plunder was the Inquisition. He loved the Inquisition and is said to have made much of his large fortune from those who were hauled before it, who were either executed or imprisoned. In either case Nicholas made their possessions his. He was also involved in the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers. So Dante, in his *Inferno*, puts him head down in hell with his feet on fire.

Boniface VIII 1294-1303

This evil man started his rule in the papal chair by whispering through a hidden tube to the ruling pope, "Celestine, Celestine, lay down your office." When he did this in response to what he thought was the voice of God he was locked up in prison and starved to death. Boniface claimed he was both pope and emperor. He, as McClintock and Strong note, "carried his schemes for the enlargement of the papal power to the verge of frenzy."¹⁰

He fought with the powerful Colonna family which led him to destroy the city of Palestrina, killing 6,000 citizens. He also issued his famous Bull *Unam Sanctam* in which he claimed that the Pope was ruler over both spiritual and temporal powers and which enabled him to wear the Triple Tiara signifying such powers.

He robbed and plundered while having immoral affairs with his mistress and her daughter. Philip le Bel of France against whom Boniface had pointed his *Unam Sanctam*, caused him to be seized and imprisoned in 1303. He was later liberated by an armed insurrection and returned to Rome only to become insane. He was placed in solitary confinement where he died.

John XXIII or XXII?-1419

This John was a worthless character by all accounts and is

linked to the poisoning of Alexander V while he was still a cardinal. He called for a crusade against Ladislaus, King of Naples, because Ladislaus had driven him out of Rome. He got into a struggle with the general council he had called to meet at Constance. Sixty charges were laid against him at this council and he was deposed. He was the last pope to take the name John for many years. The name had been associated with debauchery, murder, simony, and other crimes. So the name was not chosen again until the middle of the 20th century when Pope John the XXIII or (XXIV as the case may be) was elected. The confusion in chronology is demonstrated by the fact that some historians view Cardinal Cossa as Pope John the XXII and others view him as Pope John the XXIII making the 20th century pope by that name Pope John the XXIV. Whatever the chronology Baldassare Cossa could not be saved from the charges brought against him at the Council of Constance. His court magician, Abramelin could not even save him although he tried. The 60 charges were reduced to five: lust, murder, rape, sodomy, and piracy.¹ He was found guilty and deposed.

Alexander VI 1431 -1503

His mother, Jane Borgia was the sister of Pope Calixtus III. He was originally called Rodrigo Lenzoli but later changed his surname to Borgia. McClintock and Strong euphemistically describe his youthful years as very dissolute. The fact is he had several mistresses; the main ones being Vannoza Cattanei and Giulia Farnese.

He committed his first murder at the age of twelve and fathered at least 10 illegitimate children. He bought himself the papacy. It has been said of him that he single-handedly justified the Reformation. He died after being poisoned by a draught he had prepared to poison two new cardinals, when he himself drank it by accident. He also had Savonarola the man who cried out against the sins of the papacy executed.¹²

He bought the papal chair by giving various Cardinals all kinds of gifts so they would vote for him. He gave Cardinal Orsino the castles of Monticello and Savriani. He gave to the Cardinal of Colonna the rich abbey of St. Benedict. To the Cardinal of St. Angelo, he gave the bishopric of Porto, and the

tower which was dependent upon it, and a cellar full of wine. He also dispensed various other gifts to several other cardinals to secure his nomination to the papal chair. He became pope in 1492 and took the title Alexander VI.

His pontificate was a particularly evil one. He made everything subservient to the raising of his ten illegitimate children. Again, McClintock and Strong try to shield their readers from the coarseness and vulgarity and immorality and debauchery of this pope. They noted the following:

Of the crimes alleged against Alexander and his children, this is not the place to speak in detail; it is enough to say that his pontificate rivaled the worst years of the Roman Empire in debauchery, venality, and murder.¹³

His death certainly seemed to be the judgment of God upon him. He requested from Cardinal Corneto the use of his magnificent palace for a great feast to celebrate his illegitimate daughter's marriage. All the Cardinals and nobility were invited to this great feast at which some of the Cardinals were to be poisoned. By mistake, (some might be forgiven if they thought on purpose,) Alexander was given the poisoned wine and died the same night.

McClintock and Strong also point out that even for such a monster as Alexander VI there have been those who sought to defend him and his papal reign.

Among those who doubt, or affect to doubt, the stories of his great crimes, are Voltaire, Roscoe, the *Biographie Universelle* of Michaud, and Appleton's *Cyclopedia*. But the evidence of contemporary writers is not to be shaken by the kind of criticism employed by those who would whitewash the Borgias. See as the chief authorities. (They then give a list of the main authorities which establish their facts.)¹⁴

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The Popes in Reformation Times

Pope Paul III 1468 -1549

Paul's original name was Alessandro Farnese. He was educated at the University of the Medici at Florence. He was noted for the immoral company which he kept at this time in his life. He supported various mistresses, fathered children out of wedlock, and as McClintock and Strong note, "in many ways gained unevitable notoriety."¹ He worked his way up the ranks of the "church" first as apostolical chancellor's aide where he gained friends by his promptness to duties. In 1493 he was made a bishop. In 1499 he was created a Cardinal and then later Dean of Sacred College. On the death of Clement VII in 1534, Farnese was elected pope.

He is noted in history because of the times in which he served the papacy, the times when the Protestant Reformation was breaking out in Europe. He was pope when Henry VIII of England defected from Rome. He also was the pope who was involved with the struggles of the German and Swiss Protestants at this juncture in history. He was guilty of simony and cruelty. He put to death the leaders of the people in Perugia and built a citadel there to keep them in fear and subjugation. He attacked the Colonna, a powerful baronial family and took all their strongholds. He died in 1549 having failed to defeat Protestantism.

Leo X -?-1521

This waster was pope for only two years but it would take more than the few lines we can give him to fully describe all that he was able to do in such a short time. Malachi Martin writes of this pope:

One matter troubles Leo besides money - Petrucci. Petrucci is a name Leo never forgets. He used to love that cardinal - and the other conspirators. But they did not understand; and when Leo banished Cardinal Petrucci's brother from Siena, drove Cardinal Piera's brother from

Florence, defeated Cardinal Riario in the conclave, and refused the rich archbishopric of Marseilles to Cardinal di Saulis, they plotted against his life.²

Malachi Martin is a Roman Catholic who still believes, as far as I know, in the primacy of the pope, and that the Roman Catholic church is the true church. Yet he describes some of the worst crimes and sins, which the various popes have committed, in more detail than I do. In the above quote all these cardinals are plotting to murder the pope and yet it is the house of Cardinals who sit to elect the pope's successor. So a group of murderous conspirators is the group from which the next pope will be chosen!

Martin continues:

Petrucchi was given a safe-conduct pass by Leo on condition that he come back to Rome in 1517. Once back, Leo had him thrown, cardinal's robes and all, into the infamous Sammarocco dungeon in Sant' Angelo and tortured daily on the rack. "No faith need be kept with a poisoner," Leo retorted to the Spanish Ambassador who was a guarantor of Petrucci's safe-conduct. . . The same day Cardinal Riario and cardinals Soderini, Adrian, and di Saulis were also arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. Leo presided at their trials in which Adrian and di Saulis were fined 25,000 ducats apiece, . . . Cardinal Riario was fined 150,000, to be paid in three monthly payments, and promised a grand-niece in marriage to de' Medici nephew. Cardinal Petrucci was condemned to death and received his sentence with a stream of blasphemies and curses. He kicked a priest in the groin who approached to confess him, and was strangled in prison by Leo's official executioner, Roland the Moor.³

Martin also recounts the following:

For two years after this Leo lived in fear of assassination; he sought out and liquidated the family and friends of Petrucci... Leo himself said mass daily surrounded by men with drawn swords and hidden archers with arrows at the ready. .. Leo

shivered at Petrucci's confession on the rack: "Eight times, I, Cardinal Petrucci, went to a consistory with a stiletto beneath my robes waiting for an opportune moment to kill de' Medici (Leo)." ⁴

Leo was also the pope who declared Luther anathema, excommunicated him, and placed him under the ban of the empire to be killed on sight. ⁵ Leo had no time for religion he liked to hunt, put on banquets, masked balls, comedies, music, dancing, and theater. He could not understand why many did not like him.

He died on Dec. 1, 1521, just as the Reformation was getting off the ground. He died suddenly and more than likely had been poisoned.

Paul IV-1476-1559

Pope Paul IV has been praised by some writers as a very efficient pope. He certainly was. One of the main areas in which he exercised his efficiency was in the strengthening of the Inquisition.

Von Ranke states that prior to the rise of Caraffa, who was later to take the name of Pope Paul IV, the Inquisition had fallen into decay. So Caraffe, who was at that time a Cardinal along with Cardinal Alvarez of Toledo, told the pope that the only way the evils of false teaching could be remedied was to set up a thoroughly efficient and thoroughly searching Inquisition.

Von Ranke noted,

Caraffa and Burgos were both old Dominicans, zealots for the purity of Catholicism... these men advised the pope to establish a supreme tribunal of inquisition in Rome, universal in its jurisdiction, and on which all others should depend. "As St. Peter," exclaimed Caraffa, "subdued the first heresiarchs in no other place than Rome, so must the successors of Peter destroy all the heresies of the world in Rome." The Jesuits account it among the glories of their order, that their founder, Loyola, supported this proposition by a special memorial. The bull was published on the

twenty-first of July, 1542. ⁶

Caraffe lost not a moment in carrying this edict into execution. Von Ranke stated,

he hired a house for immediate proceedings at his own expense; this he fitted up with rooms for the officers, and prisons for the accused, supplying the prisons with strong bolts and locks, with dungeons, chains, blocks, and every other fearful appurtenance of his office. He appointed commissioners-general for the different countries. ..

The manuscript life of Caraffa gives the following rules as drawn up by Caraffa himself; and as being the best he could devise for promoting the end in view:

"First. When the faith is in question, there must be no delay; but at the slightest suspicion, rigorous measures must be resorted to with all speed.

Secondly. No consideration to be shown to any prince or prelate, however high his station.

Thirdly. Extreme severity is rather to be exercised against all who attempt to shield themselves under the protection of any potentate...

Fourthly. No man must debase himself by showing toleration towards heretics of any kind, above all toward Calvinists."⁷

Everyone was subject to the authority of the Inquisitors. The suspected were at once "to be thrown into prison, the guilty to be punished by loss of life and confiscation of property. They were thus to proceed enforcing and executing whatever might most effectually suppress and uproot the errors that have found place in the Christian community, and permitting no vestige of them to remain."⁸

Persecution and inquisition now filled many parts of Europe. "Scarcely is it possible to be a Christian and die quietly in one's bed,"⁹ stated Antonio dei Pagliarici. All men of letters were subjected to the most rigorous supervision.

To aid the Inquisitors to keep writers in check lest they spread any heresies, Caraffa decreed that no book, whether new or old, and whatever its contents, should in the future be printed

without permission from the inquisitors. Even the officers of customs were ordered not to deliver any package whether of printed books or MSS, without first laying the contents before the Inquisition.

Von Ranke notes that these laws were carried into execution with incredible success. Though many thousands of copies of the work "On the Benefits Bestowed by Christ," were disseminated, not one was suffered to escape; the book entirely disappeared. Whole piles of confiscated copies were burnt in Rome.¹⁰

When Pope Paul IV died there was a riotous tumult in the streets of Rome. The common people rose in insurrection, ran to the prison of the Inquisition, wounded a Dominican monk who acted as commissary, delivered all the prisoners, and burned papers.¹¹ They also threw down a statue of the pope, crying out, "Death to Caraffa."

During the long centuries of the Inquisition various kings and heads of states entered into negotiations with the papacy to try to bring to pass some reformation of the hideous tribunal but without success. At times, the occupant of the papal chair would make concessions, but they were never carried out.

In Spain, the Inquisition never really died out until the last vestiges of Protestantism had been ruthlessly suppressed. Even as late as 1762 when the Grand Inquisitor was exiled to a convent for condemning a book against the king's will the Inquisition was still operating in Spain.

When Joseph Napoleon by an edict in 1808 finally abolished the Inquisition in Madrid, Llorente calculated that from the time of its introduction into Spain in 1481 until 1808, the Inquisition in Spain alone had condemned 341,021 persons. "Of these 31,912 persons had been burnt alive; 17,659 in effigy, and 291,456 others punished severely."¹²

But Spain was not yet through with the Inquisition even then. For Ferdinand VII reestablished the Inquisition when he regained the throne in 1814. McClintock and Strong wrote the following:

One of the first acts of the Revolution of 1820 was the destruction of the palace of Inquisition by the people... Yet after the restoration, the apostolical party, continued to demand its re-establishment; an inquisitorial junta was

organised in 1825 and the old tribunal finally restored in 1826. The law of July 15, 1834, again suspended the Inquisition, after sequestering all its possessions, and the Constitution of 1855 expressly declares that no one should be made to suffer for his faith. Yet in 1857 the Inquisition showed itself still very vigorous in persecuting all persons suspected of Protestantism, and all books containing such doctrines (were to be destroyed).¹³

To this day there still remains the holy Office of Inquisition in Rome. It no longer brings people before its once feared tribunals, but it does demonstrate the papacy never really changes unless forced to do so by civil governments.

Some of the popes, as Paul IV, Innocent III, and Nicholas III, with others, demonstrated great attachment to the Inquisition and increased, rather than diminished, its power. The men who called themselves the Vicar of Christ lived off the possessions they stole from those hauled before their Inquisition.

Yet the modern dunderheads continue to praise such an unholy regime as if such things were pipedreams instead of stern and hideous historical realities.

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Pius VII

Martin describes the middle of the nineteenth century in these words:

The legacy of Pius VII was a terrible one: oppression, surveillance, a dictatorship. Between 1823 (death of Pius VII) and 1846 (when Pius IX was elected), almost 200,000 citizens of the papal states were severely punished (death, life imprisonment, exile, galleys) for political offences; another 1.5 million were subject to constant police surveillance and harassment.

There was a gallows permanently in the square of every town and city and village. Railways, meetings of more than three people, and all newspapers were forbidden. All books were censored. A special tribunal sat permanently in each place to try, condemn, and execute the accused. All trials were conducted in Latin. Ninety-nine percent of the accused did not understand the accusations against them. Every pope tore up the stream of petitions that came constantly asking for justice, for the franchise, for reform of the police and prison system. When revolts occurred in Bologna, in the Romagna, and elsewhere, they were put down with wholesale executions, sentences to lifelong hard labor in the state penitentiary, to exile, to torture... Secret societies abounded. Assassination, robberies, crime in general increased.¹

Nowadays millions of deluded people think that the papacy is a great defender of democracy and political freedom. The papacy has been for centuries the very epitome of hard-line dictatorship. It only gave up such a dictatorship when forced to do so by force of arms.

Pope Pius XII This pope signed a concordat with Adolf Hitler. He worked

with the Nazis in Croatia in the years 1941-1944. Anton Pavelic who was the puppet head of state for Croatia collaborated closely with the Nazis in perpetrating the worst massacre of the twentieth century at that time.

The United States and NATO are at this very moment ready to bomb the Serbs again. The Croats are considered model citizens even though they massacred the Serbs in a reign of terror aided and abetted by the Nazis.

Archbishop Stepinac was hailed as a wonderful anticommunist in the United States and Pope Pius made him a cardinal for his bloody reign of terror against the Serbs. Stepinac was the man behind the murderous Ustashi, some of whom were Roman Catholic priests, who were responsible for the massacre of the Serbs and for the forced conversion of others.

The documentation of this horrible period is now beyond question, yet it is all shoved under the proverbial carpet, so that NATO and the US can now once again kill the Serbs. Manhattan in his well documented work *The Vatican Holocaust* noted the following:

The Ustashi terror cannot be either minimized, excused, or condoned. For the mass murders carried out by individuals apparelled in clerical garb truly were instigated from the archiepiscopal palaces of the Catholic hierarchy. That Hierarchy knew, nay, IT APPROVED AND TACITLY ENCOURAGED THE SANGUINARY TASK.²

Noble wrote of this infamous holocaust:

Croatia... became a Fascist-Romanist mini-state, spawning the Ustashi who brutally murdered 240,000 Serbs and forcibly converted 1,200,000 to the fold of Romanism.³

All kinds of excuses have been made for this man but none of them come close to absolving him from his evil conduct. This man's hands are stained with the blood of hundreds of thousands of Serbian Orthodox who were massacred in unbelievable fashion right in the middle of the twentieth-century.

This is the pope that Hockhuth, the German writer, called *The Deputy* in his book by that name. Meaning that the Pope

who claimed to be God's representative on earth, God's Deputy, sat idly by while thousands of Jews were taken to the gas chambers, without so much as raising a whimper.

What Pius XII had started in his diabolical crusade against the Serbian Orthodox in 1941, his successors have carried on in a more subtle fashion, aided and abetted by the fire power of NATO and the United States. The Vatican is still trying to decimate the Serbs in the year 1999, while all the time speaking about ecumenical love.

Ecumenical love is surely one of the stranger elements in the modern world. I watched a program where a young Croatian woman was being interviewed about the struggles in Bosnia. She repeatedly said, "I love everybody." When asked by the interviewer about the massacre of the Serbs by the Croats she said, "that was before my time, I do not know anything about that. I just love everybody."

Then the person conducting the interview asked her should the allies intervene with air strikes and she said yes. So I could not help but wonder at modern ecumenical love expressed so neatly by this young woman. "I love everybody but I wish you would call down airstrikes upon those I love." That in essence is what she was saying!

Professor Noble notes that Yugoslavia has been a thorn in the side of the Vatican for years:

Yugoslavia, where the particular historical thorn in the Vatican's flesh has been the Orthodox Serbs, has been successfully dismembered following the cunningly contrived illegal secession of the Roman Catholic provinces of Slovenia and Croatia.⁴

The Vatican immediately recognized illegal Croatia and the United States, following the Vatican lead, also recognized Croatia. It is nothing short of amazing that new Roman Catholic states can be recognized immediately, but the North of Ireland which has been in existence for almost 80 years is NOT recognized!

Noble again:

Ominously, the planned destruction of Yugoslavia has now

actually been achieved... Vladimir Zerenovski recently recognized and described Croatia's secession from the legally-constituted State of Yugoslavia as a "Vatican plot.". .. The Vatican's dream of detaching Roman Catholic Slovakia and thus dividing Czechoslovakia has now also materialized.⁵

It is indeed sad to watch the schemes of the Vatican, and her ungodly popes, receive the support of both the United and Great Britain. The Vatican seeks to divide a nation when the Roman Catholics are in the minority and she seeks to unify divided states to crush minorities.

The Vatican instantly approved and recognized Croatia when that country illegally seceded from Yugoslavia. But she wants Ireland to be united and ruled from Dublin because that would give the Roman Catholics a majority in a unified state. The US sent a Roman Catholic ex-senator Mitchell over there to put the Vatican plan into operation. Clinton's so-called peace initiative in Northern Ireland was really the Vatican initiative and the Protestants were sold down the river by Clinton, and Mitchell!

Pope John Paul I 1978 - 33 days

This pope was only pope for thirty three days before he died. David Yallup wrote a book entitled, *In God's Name*. The sub-title was "An Investigation into the murder of Pope John Paul I."

Yallup's book is one long expose of the murders and mysteries which surrounded the death of this pope. He believes the pope was poisoned. He died right in the Vatican so the poisoner had to be one who lived in and knew the Vatican and the habits of the pope.

Yallup wrote, "Whoever planned to murder the pope in such a way (so as to avoid detection) would have to have intimate knowledge of Vatican procedures. They would have to know there would be no autopsy. . ."⁶ Yallup states later: "Wishing to avoid" grave insinuations "I will make instead a categorical statement: I am completely convinced that Pope John Paul I was murdered."⁷

It is interesting to note that the US news media never reported the possibility that the pope was murdered. Other

countries did. Newspapers in Italy and Spain carried headlines to the effect that the pope was murdered. But the US news media, which is probably more subservient to the Vatican than any other western nation with the exception of Ireland, simply gave out the Vatican line. Yallup noted the following:

In Spain as in other countries, the controversy broke into public debate. Professor Rafael Gamba of the University of Madrid was one who complained of the Vatican "doing things in the Italian manner or in the Florentine manner as in the Renaissance."⁸

meaning that the evil practices of the Borgias in the 16th century were being duplicated in the 20th century. Yallup himself agreed with Gamba:

For nearly six years (Yallup wrote his book six years after the murder of the pope) the Vatican lies concerning the late pope have gone unchecked and unchallenged. The Roman Curia would have the world believe that Albino Luciani was an invalid and a simple rather foolish man, a man whose election was an aberration and whose natural death was a merciful release for the Church. In this way they hoped to conceal murder. It is as if the past four hundred years never were: we are back with the Borgias.⁹

The thing, that the reader should always call to mind, is the blasphemous claim of the Popes to be the Vicar of Christ. Here are men engaged in MURDER and the plotting of MURDER and at the same time they claim to be the spiritual ruler of the entire world, and the Vicar, the Representative of Christ on earth. What insufferable men, what unmitigated blasphemy, and yet we have evangelical spokesmen today praising unstintingly such monsters of depravity and duplicity! No wonder Christ Himself said, "when the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?"

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The Last Two Popes

Paul VI and John Paul II

That there has been a colossal shift in the papacy in the past thirty years few could deny. The papacy at the end of the 19th century had been stripped of the Papal States and reduced to the smallest state in the world -- the Vatican. With the loss of its territory the papacy scrambled about to enhance its power in other ways.

The Pope was declared to be INFALLIBLE in 1870. This claim to be infallible was a laughing matter outside of Roman Catholicism for years. But as time passed the Pope became more and more acclaimed by world leaders.

With the loss of the Papal States the papacy concentrated more on deception. The papacy has always been a deceitful organization but in former times it also used military might to attain its ends. With the passing of its temporal power in Europe it has concentrated more and more on pushing the Pope as a person and as world leader to the fore, while working its intrigue in political circles around the globe. The result of propaganda and intrigue has been the elevation of the pope of Rome to the position of the world's greatest spiritual leader, and a leader of leaders.

It is almost incredible that so many Evangelicals should now be praising the Pope of Rome as a World-renowned Christian leader, while at the same time some Roman Catholics believe the Pope of Rome to be Antichrist. It is indeed an amazing reversal.

While Billy Graham, Jack Van Impe, Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson continue to heap accolades upon the papacy W. F. Strojie, the conservative Roman Catholic scholar blasts the Pope as Antichrist. Malachi Martin also, while not as severe on the papacy as Strojie, seems to be alarmed at the turn the papacy has taken in recent years. So it is very interesting to say the least, that some Roman Catholics are far more critical of the papacy than self-confessed Bible believers.

W. F. Strojie has written two studies on the papacy in recent years here are some of his comments. Strojie is a dedicated Roman Catholic who believes that the Roman Catholic church is

now being betrayed by the popes of Rome, Strojie notes the following:

The utter disintegration of this Church in its members, especially as it appears among the Bishops, including their chief member in the papal chair, is certainly not a sign without significance for the whole world.¹

Strojie elaborates,

What sin, what multitude of the most enormous sins would a man need to commit to exceed the deeds of lust, murder and oppression of the poor by men who have already lived, or live today? What natural or unnatural vices, of lust, murder or torture, of child murders, of slavery, of general destruction, of unjust wars and of planned moral corruption of nations, have not already been committed by some can it be that any man, no matter how powerful, will exceed the sins of past great sinners, so as to deserve, IN A UNIQUE SENSE, the title Man of Sin, or Son of Perdition.. . This person cannot be simply another evil man in the ordinary sense, no matter how far reaching his evil influence may be in the secular order. Again, this person must be unique by reason of his high and unique spiritual office. Who then in a theologically exact sense can fill the office of Antichrist? I suggest that it can only be he who can effectively oppose himself to the past vicars of Christ and their doctrines from the time of Peter, and who can effectively oppose himself to the true worship of God.²

Strojie then continues,

I am convinced that it is theologically necessary that Antichrist be a pope. I agree.. . Antichrist, the Man of Sin, Son of Perdition, to deserve these titles must hold a unique spiritual office, one in which the greatest possible doctrinal disciplinary and moral corruption can be accomplished. And to oppose Christ who is all Truth the essential procedure of Antichrist will not be one of force but of deception. This follows from St. Paul's prophecy of a great spiritual blindness

in the time of Antichrist and the Great Apostasy.. . With due respect for possible non-Catholic claimants, I scoff at the notion that anyone OTHER THAN A POPE COULD BE THE ANTICHRIST.³ (emphasis added)

Strojie is not alone among Roman Catholic writers in his concerns about the modern papacy. Malachi Martin is also concerned although not as outspoken in his criticisms as Strojie. Martin speaks of a "new agenda" which the pope seems to be desirous of fulfilling which involves far more than the future of the Roman Catholic institution.

Martin also speaks of the alienation of many Roman Catholic priests, nuns, and theologians, from the traditional views of Roman Catholicism, and the reaction of others to this alienation, even to the point of calling the pope the ANTICHRIST:

(Pope Paul VI could not stem the onslaught) women who wanted to be priests, priests who wanted to be married, bishops who wanted to be regional popes, theologians who claimed absolute teaching authority, Protestants who claimed equality and identity, homosexuals and divorced people who called for acceptance of their status on their terms. .. traditional minded Catholics who BITTERLY REPROACHED HIM WITH BEING ANTICHRIST. (emphasis added)⁴

Martin takes up the alienation and confusion in the Roman Catholic Institution in even more detail in his later work The Keys of This Blood. There he noted the further decay within the organization:

Anybody who examines the Pontiff's governance of his Roman Catholic institutional organization since 1978 must come away STUNNED at the DETERIORATION that began during the fifteen year reign of Pope Paul VI, and that the present Pope has neither REVERSED nor ARRESTED.⁵

Martin enlarges:

The overall result of that policy for the Roman Church has

been profound. But in one key area - the area of papal privilege, and of the papal power embodied in the sacred symbol of the Petrine Keys -- the policy has been disastrous. For it has enabled those in the Church bent on an anti-papal agenda - the antiChurch within the church -- to arrive with in touching distance of their main objective; namely, the effective ELIMINATION of papal power itself.⁶ (emphasis added)

(So the Pope may be working to rend the Great Whore which rode for so long upon his back.)

Martin continues:

The result is something that has never existed before in the Roman Church. An anonymous and impersonal force has been created, centered in the Bishop's Conferences around the world, which has BEGUN to exercise ITS OWN POWER in contravention of papal power. ..

It is true that this victory of in Church papal enemies is only a de facto affair; that nowhere and by no explicit statement has Pope John Paul formally renounced his Petrine Power. But that is cold comfort for those who find his huge GAMBLE with the Petrine Office the MOST FRIGHTENING ELEMENT of John Paul's papal policy...

The effective catalyst here is the Pontiff's abstention from exercising his power in matters critical to Church governance...⁷ (emphasis added)

It is quite possible that the papacy is now looking far beyond the confines of the "church" to a New World Order where the pope will become the servant of a greater and more evil design. Where the rebellious remains of the Scarlet Woman will merely become a stepping stone to greater things.

It is now popular to set forth the idea that the Antichrist is a secular atheistic monster. In this way, every religious person in the United States can then be vociferous in his condemnation of such a person. Muslims, Jews, Roman Catholics, and Protestants can all join in condemning such a rascal.

Mystery Babylon, that is, Mystery Confusion is the cage of

EVERY false religion. False religions cannot be against Antichrist for they are antichristian. They are part and parcel of Antichrist.

It is interesting to note that Pacelli who was later to become Pope Pius XII, according to Martin, "in forty out of forty four addresses as papal nuncio, Pacelli inveighed against Antichrist and warned of a gigantic struggle about to begin between Satan and Jesus for the soul of Europe and the souls of men."⁸

Pedro Arrupe, the former head of the Jesuits, also warned about an atheistic antichrist which was arising in the western world. So Roman Catholic spokesmen, from the pope on down, have warned about a coming atheistic monster out to control the world, for this has been the Roman Catholic teaching on Antichrist for centuries.

In the United States, Jews and Muslims seldom say much about their views on the subject of Antichrist. However, in their religious writings the issue of Antichrist is addressed. The Muslims believe that Antichrist will arise at the end of the world and that he will be a Jew. The Jews believe that the Antichrist will be a Christian. *

The Muslims claim that Mohamed taught that Antichrist would come at the end of the world and that several signs were to precede his coming. The first sign is a strange rising of the sun in the west instead of the east. The second sign is to be the rising of a beast from the earth.

The third sign is to be the capture of Constantinople and while the spoil of this city is being divided news will come of the appearance of the Antichrist. This Antichrist will be blind in one eye and deaf in one ear, and will have the name of UNBELIEVER written on his forehead. According to the Muslims this is the one that the Jews call Messiah-Ben-David.⁹ So the Muslims view Antichrist as a Jew who comes against the "true" religion of Islam and seeks to destroy it.

* It is interesting to note that Jerry Falwell recently retracted his statement that Antichrist would be a Jew. The Jews rose up in anger when Falwell said while preaching on Antichrist that he would be a Jew.

The Jews at the same time are looking for their coming Messiah as well as a coming Antichrist. The name given by the Jews to describe their idea of a coming evil leader is Armillus.

There are several rabbinical books in which a circumstantial account is given of him. . . There will be twelve signs of the coming of the Messiah. .. The seventh sign will be the rise of Armillus whom the Christians call Antichrist.¹⁰

After a time of great persecution the true Messiah will come and defeat Antichrist. Armillus will raise a great army of Christians and lead them to Jerusalem. But God will deliver the Israelites through the true Messiah. So the Jews see Antichrist as a leader of the Christians and his evil work an attempt to overthrow true Judaism.

This is why a secular antichrist appeals to so many today. A secular antichrist does not pit Jew against Christian, or Muslim against Jew. It does not pit Roman Catholic against Protestant nor Protestant against Roman Catholic. If Antichrist is a secular atheist then all good religious people can oppose such a monster and retain their good ecumenical spirit at the same time. The secular atheistic Antichrist is the antichrist of Ecumenism.

Whereas the very name anti- Christ shows that the Beast of Revelation is not anti- Jew, he is not called anti- Mohamed, he is anti- Christ. The antichrist is the LEADER of all false religions, not the opponent of them. Lenski the old conservative Lutheran scholar wrote the following about Antichrist:

This is an apostasy. It is therefore, to be sought IN the church visible and not OUTSIDE of the church in the pagan world, in the general pagan moral decline, in Mohammedanism, in the French Revolution, in the rise and spread of Masonry, in Soviet Russia, or in lesser phenomena. We should not confuse the little antichrists with the great Antichrist, the antichrists OUTSIDE of the visible church with the great Antichrist INSIDE of it. (emphasis his)¹¹

The Man of Sin is an arch-deceiver. His main deception is to make people think he is the true Christ. He is anti-christ, the one who tries to take the place of Christ. It is not the radical

difference from Christ which the secular view of Antichrist emphasizes, rather it is the CLOSE resemblance to Christ which the Bible depicts, which should instruct the Bible-believer.

This Man of Sin works pseudo-miracles, signs and wonders. He is a religious man and a veritable Christ to those who are deceived by him.

This is what the popes of Rome have done for centuries. They have sought to replace Christ. By deception and confusion they have effectively opposed Christ as well. They are still masquerading as the Vicar of Christ today, and multiplied millions fall down before them as Mark McGuire did recently in St. Louis, abjectly kissing the ring of the great impostor.

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TOTUS TUUS

Totus Tuus is the motto of the present pope of Rome. It is Latin for Totally yours. This motto is directed not toward Christ but toward Mary. The present pope like hundreds before him is an avowed mariolater. He also worships at shrines so is a practicing idolater.

The popes of Rome even when they were not engaging in immorality and murder were mariolaters and idolaters. So that even if some did not fall to the depths of the most wicked popes, they, nevertheless, were bad examples and blind leaders of the blind.

The depth of iniquity into which modern nations have fallen, no doubt helps out the papacy. For modern popes can at least pretend to uphold the sanctity of marriage in face of the onslaught of homosexuality and divorce.

The hideous and evil practice of abortion on demand again affords the papacy a platform to utter pious phrases in defence of the unborn. But the Word of God is clear in demanding purity of worship. The first table of the Law cannot be ignored by piously pretending to uphold the second table.

True worship is commanded and idolatry forbidden in the first and second commandments. When these are ignored then judgment must fall. The bulk of the Old Testament is a witness to the fact that God does not take false worship and wrong worship lightly. Israel and Judah worshipped under every green tree and on every high hill and for these very acts of worship were condemned and destroyed by the Lord God Almighty!

Johann August Wilhelm Neander, the great German Lutheran church historian wrote these words about the papacy:

Christ never had an enemy like this; so able to pervert the way of truth into falsehood, insomuch that the true church, with her children, is trodden underfoot. The worship that belongs to God alone he transfers to Antichrist himself - to the creature, male and female, deceased -- to images, carcasses, and relics. The sacrament of the Eucharist is converted into an object of adoration, and the worshipping of God alone is prohibited.

He robs the Saviour of His merits, and the sufficiency of

His grace in justification and regeneration, the remission of sins, sanctification, establishment in the faith, and spiritual nourishment; ascribing all these things to his own authority, to a form of words, to his own works, to the intercession of the saints, and to the fire of purgatory.

He seduces people from Christ, drawing off their minds from seeking those blessings in Christ, by a lively faith in God and in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, teaching his followers rather to expect them by the will and pleasure and works of Antichrist.

He places all religion and holiness in going to mass, and has mingled together all descriptions of ceremonies, Jewish, heathen, and Christian -- and by means thereof, the people are deprived of spiritual food, seduced from true religion and the commandments of God, and established in vain and presumptuous hopes. All his works are done to be seen of men, that he may glut himself with insatiable avarice, and hence everything is set for sale.¹ *

The Papacy has vitiated the true worship of God through the only Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, and substituted in its place a hodge-podge of man-made rituals and ceremonies some of which are blasphemous and all of which are condemned by the Word of God and useless to those caught up in them.

Until we learn the first and second commandments we cannot advance to the others. For the others have no basis if the first two are ignored! God is the author of morality, and sanctity, and purity. These cannot exist where the true God is ignored and where His commandments about His worship are

*Last November (1998) Pope John Paul II announced that the year 2000 would be special holy year in which Roman Catholics can obtain special indulgences for their sins that act as wild cards to speed up their ascension to heaven. According to policy dating back to the 16th century Roman Catholics who visit the sick, contribute to charities, or who stop smoking or drinking for a day may get an indulgence, according to this news article.

treated in a cavalier fashion.

No one can truly love his neighbor as himself, who has not learned first to love the Lord with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind. God's sequence is inviolate. It cannot be broken without dire results.

When one looks at the history of the papacy and the history of the "church" and the contemporary scene within the confines of Roman Catholicism, he should be absolutely amazed that any self-confessed Bible-believer could defend such an apostate conoral conglomerate, much less praise it, and extol the present leader of such a den of iniquity, as the greatest moral and spiritual leader upon earth today. The very fact that such praise is commonplace today and scarcely ever ONE voice raised against such an enormous lie is indeed a commentary upon not only our times, but the Protestant church of our times.

The Scriptures speak of those who believe in the lie. The setting of this text is in the passage which deals with the Man of Sin. It is in this VERY AREA where people are completely deceived. They are completely fooled by the satanic power which energizes the Papacy. So when they refuse the truth they are turned to fables and will believe the lie rather than the truth because they love unrighteousness.

The Apostle Paul wrote "Let no MAN deceive you." It should be obvious to Bible-believers, but apparently is not, that the one man in the world doing the most deceiving today is the Pope of Rome. No other man comes CLOSE to the deception practiced by the Pope. He must rank FIRST in the line of deceivers down through church history right up into the present day.

If the Word of God is true then purgatory is a lie; the Mass is a lie; enforced celibacy is a doctrine of demons; the whole Roman Catholic priesthood is a lie, for Christ has abolished the priestly line and made every believer his own priest; Mariolatry is a lie; good works as a basis of salvation is a lie; justification by works is a lie; baptismal regeneration is a lie; the whole system of Romanism is based on a lie and those who believe the lie shall be judged because they loved not the truth.

The Reformers preached the true gospel of redeeming grace. They correctly taught that good works could never be the basis of salvation, and if someone tried to make them so, they became works of iniquity. Salvation is by grace alone.

Justification is by faith alone. When the great doctrine of Sola Scriptura is jettisoned all kinds of evil flourish. The Bible must remain our only authority and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

It is surely instructive to look at how the United States is slowly but surely becoming Romanized. The "clergy" is set up on a pedestal. Two recent documentaries as of this writing dealt with the "clergy." One showed a Jesuit priest who helped the handicapped. He was a nice man who helped others, told jokes, worked hard and blessed the entire community. The second one showed a Baptist preacher who had hired a hit-man to kill the husband of the woman who had become his mistress.

So it does not need a rocket scientist to figure out who is supposedly the true "Clergyman." Yet the Bible indicates our faith IS NEVER TO STAND IN THE WISDOM OF MEN but only in the POWER OF GOD. The power of God is the crucified Christ. He is both the wisdom of God and the power of God. So to all true Bible-believers it is not a question of a man, whether he is "good" or "bad," but a question of THE MAN Christ Jesus.

For there is only ONE Mediator between God and Men THE Man Christ Jesus. Historically this has always been the difference between Rome's priests and Protestant believers. From the pope on down, the Roman Priesthood teaches that all kinds of Mediators other than Christ exist, including the most important of all, Mary. Whereas Bible-believing Protestants have always believed in ONLY ONE Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ ALONE saves. There is no other Name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved. When any man comes between the sinner and salvation, he is a thief and a robber. Many "clergymen" today are nothing but thieves and robbers. The faithful minister points to Christ only. He is merely a voice lifting up Christ as the only Saviour. If, for any reason, he should begin, to lift himself up, he will find out quickly that the Lord never gives His glory to another. This is why so-called great preachers many times find themselves disgraced. The true preacher points the way to Christ and tries to stay out of the way, while exalting only the Lord Jesus Christ.

O Christ in Thee my soul has found And found in Thee
ALONE; The peace, the joy, I sought so long, The bliss til
now unknown.

The pleasures lost I sadly mourned. But never wept for Thee;
'Til grace the sightless eyes received Thy loveliness to see.

Now none but Christ can satisfy, None other name for me;
There's love and life, and everlasting joy Lord Jesus found in
Thee.

Christ said plainly: "Beware of false prophets, by their fruits
you shall know them." The fruits of the papacy are plain to be
seen both morally and spiritually and every true believer should
BEWARE of the papacy and all it represents!

To those caught up in the toils of Antichrist we urge you to
find a Bible-believing church where Christ is exalted and where
the true unadulterated Word of the Living God is proclaimed.
There you may find true salvation which can bind up the broken-
hearted and true liberty proclaimed to the captive.

Call upon the Lord Jesus Christ, for whosoever calls upon the
name of the Lord shall be saved!

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1. McClintock and Strong, Vol I., p. 258.