

# The Alignment of New Evangelicals with Apostasy

by Richard M. Bennett

**E**vangelicals throughout the centuries have maintained that justification by faith alone is the way in which sinful human beings are in Christ made right before the all Holy God.<sup>1</sup> Justification itself is a judicial declarative act on the part of God alone by which He declares that only in Christ is a man perfectly just. His judicial declarative act is not made on the basis of anything within a man, but rather it is made solely and wholly upon the righteous life and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ who lived a perfect life and paid the just penalty for sins upon the cross. Historically, Evangelicals have been in agreement with the Apostle Paul, "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."<sup>2</sup>

A person calling himself Evangelical is professing to be committed to the Gospel of Christ as proclaimed in Scripture. The true Gospel demands separation from all who teach another Gospel, as the Apostle declared, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."<sup>3</sup> Without such separation the name Evangelical signifies nothing. New Evangelicalism, which willingly compromises with, and accommodates another gospel, has gained ground everywhere since about 1960. Since then the Evangelical world has changed beyond recognition. This is fully documented in *Evangelicalism Divided* by Iain Murray (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000). The first and second National Evangelical Anglican Conferences that met at Keele and Nottingham in the UK in 1967 and 1977 respectively showed a willingness to be united with ritualistic Anglicans, essentially Roman Catholic in belief and practice, and liberals who believed in a fallible Bible. Leading evangelicals, such as J.I. Packer and John Stott, endorsed the statements from these conferences and, in so doing; set aside Gospel truth in favor of accepting fellow Anglicans as true brothers and sisters in Christ. The most drastic departure however from the Biblical Gospel took place some seventeen years after the Nottingham Conference in 1994 in the USA. At the end of March 1994, a group of twenty leading Evangelicals and twenty leading Roman Catholics produced a

document entitled *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium* (ECT).

Two of the main instigators of this intense ecumenical thrust were Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, a Lutheran pastor turned Roman Catholic priest. The specific task was begun in September 1992. These men were joined in the writing process by Larry Lewis of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Jesse Miranda of Assemblies of God, John White of the Geneva College and National Association of Evangelicals, and others, including two Jesuits, Avery Dulles and Juan Diaz-Vilar. Two more Jesuits had signed the declaration by the time of its presentation. In addition to the Evangelical participants who helped form the document, signers included J. I. Packer, Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, Mark Noll of Wheaton College, and Pat Robertson of the 700 Club. Roman Catholic signers included such well know figures as Cardinal John O'Connor, now deceased, Archbishop Sevilla, Archbishop Stafford, and Bishop Francis George, now Archbishop of Chicago.

## The Gospel According to ECT

The signers of ECT readily admit of "differences that cannot be resolved here". However motivated by the desire for union on important moral issues, the authors of ECT proclaim that Evangelicals and Catholics are one in Christ, and that all are truly Christians. The primary fallacy of the lengthy document is its declaration on the Gospel. The signers state what they believe comes closest to Gospel of Christ when they declare,

*"We affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ. Living faith is active in love that is nothing less than the love of Christ, . . ."* (p. 5)

To be Biblical, this statement should read, "We affirm together that we are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone." The word "alone" signifies that the perfect righteousness of Christ Jesus and that alone is sufficient before the Holy God to justify unholy sinners.<sup>4</sup> To so define justification, however, would exclude the Catholic sacraments and the priests who control them, both of which are necessary for the Catholic.<sup>5</sup> Thus a subtraction had

to be made from the Gospel of Christ in excluding what is signified by the word alone. In a similar manner an addition had to be made to the gospel in ECT words that qualify faith as, "living faith active in love". This was to accommodate the inclusion of the Catholic sacraments. This was exactly the same intent of the Council of Trent in its qualification of the meaning of faith. Trent declared,

*"For faith, unless hope and charity be added to it, neither unites one perfectly with Christ, nor makes him a living member of his body.... This faith, in accordance with apostolic tradition, catechumens beg of the Church before the sacrament of baptism..."*<sup>6</sup>

The theology of the Church of Rome always comes back to the concept of "living faith" so as to include works, particularly her sacraments that she defines as necessary for salvation.<sup>7</sup>

The New Evangelical signers of ECT have concurred with the Roman Catholic definition of "living faith active in love", and thus they have formally agreed to an addition to the Gospel that nullifies its message.

Rome continues to show her understanding of "living faith" in the 1994 *Catechism* when she declares, "the very root of the Church's living faith [is] principally by means of Baptism."<sup>8</sup> If the New Evangelicals do in fact believe the Roman Catholic concept of "living faith," they ought logically to endorse Rome's curse upon all who have simple faith in God's grace, as was officially done by Rome at the Council of Trent,

*"If anyone shall say that by faith alone the sinner is justified, so as to understand that nothing else is required to cooperate in the attainment of the grace of justification, and that it is in no way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will: let him be anathema [cursed]."*<sup>9</sup>

To endorse Roman Catholic teaching, therefore, is to deny the clear teaching of Scripture, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us."<sup>10</sup>

### **Evangelicals Also Endorse Baptismal Regeneration**

In the general heading of "We Witness Together," and (to use the document's language) "in the context

of evangelization and 'reevangelization,'" the New Evangelicals go so far as to recognize that "for Catholics, all who are validly baptized are born again and are truly, however imperfectly, in communion with Christ." (p. 23). These New Evangelicals might as well have quoted the Roman Catholic Code of Canon Law that says the same thing,

*"Baptism...by which men and women are freed from their sins, are reborn as children of God and, configured to Christ..."*<sup>11</sup>

*In contrast to the teaching of Rome and the signed statements of J. I. Packer, Chuck Colson, et al., the words of the risen Christ in giving the Gospel are crystal clear. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned."<sup>12</sup> Faith is the key of saving grace, and unbelief is the chief damning sin. Faith is what is absolutely necessary to salvation, baptism is an ordinance that follows faith and simply testifies to it. Proof of this is found in the fact of the omission in the second half of the verse: it is not "he that is not baptized shall be damned," but rather "he that believeth not." The repentance from this endorsement of the doctrine of Baptismal regeneration, and of an incomplete Gospel, by both subtraction and addition, requested over the years and formally called for at the 1999 Ex Catholics For Christ Conference has not come. Rather a defense of the document has been maintained both in the USA and overseas.*

### **The Devastating Effect of ECT**

The real effect of the New Evangelical compromise with the Gospel is to put a stop to the evangelization of Roman Catholics across the world. If this compromise of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ is accepted, then Bible believing churches will refrain from evangelizing Catholics. The impact on the true church in third world Catholic countries in Central and South America, in Africa, as well as in Spain, Portugal, and the Philippines, is already apparent. If this anti-Evangelical trend continues unchecked it will become ruinous to the spiritual welfare of millions of souls. But this is exactly the policy the ECT signers promulgate when they state,

*"We are aware that our experience reflects the distinctive circumstances and opportunities of Evangelicals and Catholics living together in North America. At the same time, we believe that what we have discovered and resolved is pertinent to the relationship between Evangelicals and Catholics in other parts of the world."*

and

*"...it is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community [church] to proselytize [evangelize] among active adherents of another Christian community."*

*Introduction p.1*

Since when has it been theologically illegitimate to expose error and heresy? Because these intelligent and educated men have contradicted the very Gospel of Christ, it is time to state that the biblical mandate of separation from such men must be observed! *"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."*<sup>13</sup>

### Compounded Endorsement of Rome

On November 12, 1997, a document entitled "The Gift of Salvation" was signed and published by Evangelical and Roman Catholic leaders. Its expressed intention was to demonstrate the "common faith" of Evangelicals and Roman Catholics, and to further "acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters in Christ." It was published in the December 8, 1997, issue of *Christianity Today*. Explicitly, the Roman Catholic (RC) signatories such as Richard John Neuhaus and Avery Dulles, S.J., state in the document that they are "Catholics who are conscientiously faithful to the teaching of the Catholic Church." What might be expected then is in fact discovered in the document. The Roman Catholic doctrine of conferred justification is taught as the Gospel. J.I. Packer, Charles Colson, Os Guinness, Richard Land, Bill Bright are now joined together with Timothy George, T.M. Moore, John Woodbridge, and others in not only giving a clouded Gospel-Justification message, but also in a distinctively erudite manner, endorsing Rome's doctrine of conferred inner righteousness.

### A Studied Denial of the Gospel

The document states, "Justification is central to the scriptural account of salvation, and its meaning has been much debated between Protestants and Catholics." Then it claims that the signers have reached an agreement. Their statement of accord is, *We agree that justification is not earned by any good works or merits of our own; it is entirely*

God's gift, conferred through the Father's sheer graciousness, out of the love that he bears us in his Son, who suffered on our behalf and rose from the dead for our justification. Jesus was "put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25). In justification, God, on the basis of Christ's righteousness alone, declares us to be no longer his rebellious enemies but his forgiven friends, *and by virtue of his declaration it is so.*

The subject under review is stated clearly in the first sentence. "We agree that justification...is conferred through the Father's sheer graciousness." Then by careful reading one comes to see that what the two pivotal sentences state grammatically, *"...it [justification] is entirely God's gift, conferred [rather than imputed]...and by virtue of his [God's] declaration it [justification conferred] is so."*

This is traditional Roman Catholic doctrine. To employ the Roman Catholic word "conferred" instead of the Biblical word "imputed" is tantamount to putting aside Scriptural authority on the issue of justification. Since medieval times, the RCC has clearly distinguished between the concept of imputation and the concept of God's grace conferred as a quality of the soul.<sup>14</sup> Since the Council of Trent she has condemned the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone. Present day dogma of the RCC not only upholds the teaching of the Council of Trent but also declares that such Councils are infallible.<sup>15</sup> The Council of Trent proclaims the following curse:

*If anyone shall say that by the said sacraments of the New Law, grace is not conferred from the work which has been worked [ex opere operato] but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices to obtain grace: let him be anathema.*<sup>16</sup>

*Rome's reason for such a curse on those who hold to "justification by faith alone" and to "justification imputed" is logical because of what she refuses to concede. For her, justification is not an immediate one-time act of God, received by faith alone; rather, she teaches that grace is conferred continually through her sacraments. Thus she is able to make a place for herself as a necessary means through which inner righteousness is given. She teaches in her 1994 Catechism,*



*"Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy."*<sup>17</sup>

Because inner righteousness, which is claimed to have been conferred, is located in the person, and not located in Christ, it can be lost and may need to be conferred again and again. Thus Rome officially states,

*"...the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as 'the second plank (of salvation) after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace.'"*<sup>18</sup>

Conferred justification" is necessary for Rome because of her claim that the work of her sacraments is the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus she states,

*'Sacramental grace' is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament.*<sup>19</sup>

Calling "sacramental grace" the "the grace of the Holy Spirit" is pretentious blasphemy against the All Holy God. What is declared in Scripture is the imputation of God's righteousness in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the words of the Apostle "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."<sup>20</sup> The Roman Catholic Church's persistence in using the word "conferred" is an attempt to exchange her sacraments for Jesus Christ, the Lord and giver of life.

In the face of such clarity, both on the part of Scripture and on the part of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), this new Evangelical distortion claims that both sides now agree on what has been the issue of division between Protestants and Roman Catholics for several hundred years. This it does precisely by using Roman Catholic terminology: The perversion by which the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone is set aside in this document is by the use of the RCC term, "conferred." Through this accommodation, the Biblical teaching of the righteousness of God imputed to the believer is subsumed under Rome's traditional concept of inner or infused righteousness. Evangelicals such as J.I. Packer, Timothy George, and Os Guinness, known for their writings on the subject of the Gospel, are accustomed

to the Biblical word, "imputed". For them to agree to the Roman Catholic word "conferred", in place of the Biblical term "imputed", is a major betrayal. The Apostle Paul uses the concept of imputation (crediting, reckoning or counting) eleven times in Romans chapter four, a summary of which is verse five, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Now this pivotal truth of God's righteousness in the Lord Jesus Christ imputed to the believer is undermined in the document's most horrifying concept,

*"...and by virtue of his [Holy God's] declaration it [justification conferred] is so."*

With like subtlety, so Rome has always taught, from the Council of Trent to the present day. Now the New Evangelicals join them. This is pious professional fraud. What response can one make to these new Evangelicals personalities teaching the conferred righteousness of Rome? Can one do other than separate from such men in the words of the Apostle "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."<sup>21</sup>

## **The Defense of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together."**

The most serious apologetic for the document entitled "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium"(ECT) is in the book of the same title *Evangelicals & Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission*.<sup>22</sup> The architects of ECT were well aware of the crucial distinctions with regards to the Gospel separating Catholics and Evangelicals, but they chose to by-pass them. Packer writes in *Common Mission*, "Neither evangelicals nor Roman Catholics can stipulate that things they believe, which the other side does not believe, be made foundational to partnership at this point; so ECT lets go Protestant precision on the doctrine of justification and the correlation between conversion and new birth..."<sup>23</sup> That such compromise is heretical is seen from his statements earlier in the same article in *Common Mission*, when he said, "...Roman teaching obscures the gospel and indeed distorts it in a tragically anti-spiritual and unpastoral manner..."<sup>24</sup> and "Rome's official doctrinal disorders, particularly on justification, merit, and the Mass-sacrifice, so obscure the gospel that were I, as a gesture of unity, invited to mass which of course as a Protestant I am not, nor shall be I would not feel free

to accept the invitation."<sup>25</sup> Packer towards the end of the article speaks of the evils of "humanism", "materialism, hedonism and nihilism". To rebuild a Christian consensus he proposes that, "...**domestic differences about salvation** and the Church should not hinder us from joint action in seeking to re-Christianize the North American milieu..."<sup>26</sup> But the orthodox Evangelical Packer of old spoke of the doctrine of justification by faith alone in this way, "like Atlas, it bears a world on its shoulders, the entire evangelical knowledge of saving grace"! Now, the same saving faith is downgraded to the "domestic differences about salvation." The warning of the Apostle Paul must sound again now, "but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."<sup>27</sup>

### Most Serious and Bizarre Defense

J. I. Packer, who leads the New Evangelicals, has taken an unusual explanation for his position. He has given it in different articles. One example of his strange defense is in a 1996 article, in which he states,

*"Can conservative Protestants, Eastern Orthodox, and Roman Catholics of mainstream type join together in bearing witness to all that I have spoken of? I urge that we can, despite our known and continuing differences about the specifics of the salvation process and the place of the church in that process... To be sure, fundamentalists within our three traditions are unlikely to join us in this, for it is the way of fundamentalists to follow the path of contentious orthodoxy, as if the mercy of God in Christ automatically rests on persons who are notionally correct and is just as automatically withheld from those who fall short of notional correctness on any point of substance. But this concept of, in effect, justification, not of works, but of words words, that is, of notional soundness and precision is near to being a cultic heresy in its own right and need not detain us further now, however much we may regret the fact that some in all our traditions are bogged down in it."<sup>28</sup>*

*No orthodox Evangelical has ever maintained that "notional soundness and precision", that is, doctrinal theory, ever saved anyone. Rather, orthodox Evangelicals*

*have always held to Romans 10:10, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." It appears that Packer is conducting a little casuistry of his own here. It is an ego defense attempting to preempt his critics by raising an anti-biblical dichotomy between head (religion) and heart (religion). This is an old liberal tactic, i.e., to create an unbiblical dichotomy and then infer and insinuate that any party who refuses to acknowledge it, must in the nature of the case, be unspiritual, opposed to Christian love. None of the historic Evangelical confessions of faith hold out that mere doctrinal "soundness" saves anyone. This is an absurd caricature that Packer has invented. Rather orthodox Evangelicals today, even as they did in the days of the Apostle Paul and at the Reformation, declare that it is the righteousness of Christ Jesus alone that saves a person!*

What Packer does in setting aside every point of faith alone, in Christ Jesus alone, is what the Church of Rome continually does. This is the exact point that the Apostle Paul contended for against the Judaisers and the Reformers against the Roman Catholics of their day. This is the exact point on which thousands of Evangelicals gave their lives - John Huss, William Tyndale, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, John Rogers, Anne Askew, John Bradford, and John Philpot, to name a few. Now Packer creates the concept of notional correctness and of a charged "justification by words." The ardent desire of true Evangelicals to "be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,"<sup>29</sup> was and is the heart of the Gospel, not "contentious orthodoxy" nor "cultic heresy". What Packer has done is to deny the importance of the Scriptures on the precise point of Sola Fide. He also denies the Reformation history of those Evangelicals who under the Roman Catholic Inquisition gave their lives, not for any correctness in words, but rather for their faith in Christ Jesus alone. Since the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is involved and these Reformation martyrs loved not their lives unto the death for faith in Him alone, we think this matter is so serious as to demand the judgment of the Lord Himself. "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"<sup>30</sup>

## “Separation For the Sake of the Gospel is Not Necessary”

In his essay in *Common Mission*, Roman Catholic Neuhaus stated emphatically, “If, at the end of the twentieth century, separation for the sake of the gospel is not necessary, it is not justified.”<sup>31</sup> What Neuhaus declared is that the Gospel is no longer relevant to Christian unity. This seems to be the precise intent of the 1994 ECT document and equally the 1997 “The Gift of Salvation” document. If Evangelicals who would be true to the Gospel do not combat the challenging defenses of ECT I and ECT II made by New Evangelicals and their Roman Catholic counterparts, then Neuhaus’ anti-Scriptural words “separation for the sake of the gospel is not necessary” might well fall on them and their children after them. If the lie is swallowed that separation for the sake of the Gospel is not justified, then the logical conclusion is that churches should cave in and submit to the Church of Rome. This has always been the avowed goal of Rome, as her documents verify,

“...little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesial communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist [the Mass] into that unity of the one and only Church.... This unity, we believe, dwells in the Catholic Church as something we can never lose.”<sup>32</sup>

Neuhaus’ conclusion is similar to Packer’s and still the more frightening since it comes from the Roman Catholic side, known to have legal teeth in what it decides among nations.<sup>33</sup> Neuhaus states, “But to declare it [justification by faith alone] to be the article by which the Church stands or falls in a manner that excludes other ways of saying the gospel is to turn it into a sectarian doctrine.”<sup>34</sup> The true Gospel of grace has in this statement not simply been declared unnecessary, but it has been labeled a “sectarian doctrine”. What has already happened and been reported in Europe might one day be the news in the USA.

“The Belgian Chamber of Representatives recently passed a law creating a ‘sect oversight organization’ which will ‘scrutinize’ the 189 religious organizations listed in the Belgian Parliamentary Sect Report published in April 1997...Minority evangelical, Pentecostal and Adventist churches not belonging to the United Protestant Church of Belgium, which is recognized by the state, are targeted in the Belgian Sect Report...”<sup>35</sup>

C. H. Spurgeon’s timely words apply now even more than in his own day:

“Since he was cursed who rebuilt Jericho, much more the man who labors to restore Popery among us. In our fathers’ days the gigantic walls of Popery fell by the power of their faith, the perseverance of their efforts, and the blast of their gospel trumpets...”<sup>36</sup>

The Gospel trumpet is the very issue at stake for the Roman Catholic and Evangelical signers of ECT I & II first give the false message of Rome, go on to uphold baptismal regeneration and then in defense of what they have written, declare that the Gospel of Christ is a “domestic matter” or even “a sectarian doctrine”. The Apostle Paul before he concluded his letter to the Romans inserted a final warning against false teachers who cause divisions by perverting doctrine of the Gospel he had delivered. His words were, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”<sup>37</sup> This is the same as his command in Titus 3:10-11 “A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.” How serious is the Word of the Lord to true believers in this commandment? How serious is the truth of the Gospel of Christ?

### Breaking point in history

We have reached a watershed moment in history. Those who truly adhere to the Gospel of Christ must hold that the Gospel not only is the power of God unto salvation, but that, as such, it cannot be contaminated with any other gospel (Galatians 1:8-9). Therefore, those who truly are ambassadors of the Gospel of Christ must separate themselves, not only from Roman Catholicism and her sacramental claims, but also must separate themselves from so-called Evangelicals who have proposed this declaration of Evangelical and Catholic unity, or have been party to it. In the Scriptures we are warned continually to separate from brothers who are in error.

We are considering men of our own day, some of whom have done outstanding work for the sake of the Gospel in the past. But now that these men consistently are acting as false teachers, they must be judged according as the Scripture directs us. Separation must take place. “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”<sup>38</sup> In the implementation of ECT I and II,



J. I. Packer and Charles Colson, together with Timothy George, have been the prime movers. It is necessary now to apply Biblical principles to these men and to those who support them. Since the Gospel of Christ has been denied in these two documents, it is therefore necessary that they be treated as brothers who are in grievous error.

In our temporal world, infectious diseases are quarantined and contaminated food is discarded, but the danger involved here is not only temporal. Ought not brothers who would deceive the saints of God and draw them away into an ecumenism that is contrary to the Gospel of Christ be separated from the saints of the Lord for their eternal safety? God's presence demands holiness, separation from evil. Fellowship with evil shuts out God's gracious favor. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."<sup>39</sup>

### **False Teachers Then and Now**

The testimony of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures expressly forewarns God's people of principal teachers becoming false teachers, or grievous wolves. So it was in the early days of the Church and right through history. The Church of Rome has been the main apostate system throughout the centuries because above Scripture she has embodied "the wise and learned" and because it has been the religion of kings and rulers. In history, as in our own day, she attracts scholars and philosophers, writers and businessmen. She has a form of godliness, notwithstanding errors, impieties, superstitions, and idolatries. And she has engaged well-known teachers and pastors to lend the weight of their fleshly credit to her soul-destroying errors. Even so, the Lord warned of false prophets in sheep's clothing that are really ravening wolves.<sup>40</sup> Leaving off sound doctrine is so serious that we are told, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."<sup>41</sup> The infallible Spirit of God testifies to the danger of apostasy. The Apostle Paul cautioned the elders of the church of Ephesus about "grievous wolves...not sparing the flock."<sup>42</sup> The same warning is given by the Apostle Peter calling those who would

bring in damnable heresies, "false teachers".<sup>43</sup>

There are a number of unequivocal warnings in the New Testament from the Lord Jesus Christ, and His Apostles, that a serious decline from the revealed truths of the Gospel would occur even among professed disciples. It cannot be held that these warnings were only for the first days of the Christian faith! They are directly pertinent to all believers living through New Covenant times. In the present-day religious climate, it is politically incorrect to say that any man has fallen into error and is acting the part of a false teacher or prophet. It is as though even these clear warnings were only for a certain period of early church history and not for us.

It is for us, however, to fear the All Holy God and obey his commandment to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"<sup>44</sup>, and to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"<sup>45</sup> J. I. Packer, like a modern Pied Piper, is leading many thousands of Evangelicals astray. Charles Colson, Bill Bright, Mark Noll, Pat Robertson, Os Guinness, Timothy George, and T.M. Moore, to mention just a few of the more prominent New Evangelicals, have publicly denied the Gospel in endorsing the anti-Biblical terms and erroneous doctrinal concepts of the Church of Rome. All together, they are falsely identifying Catholics as "our brothers and sisters in Christ", thereby reinforcing the tragic and catastrophic delusions of these poor souls and denying them the substance of saving truth! Unless there is some public repentance, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ must not only separate from these men, but also go on to pray that the Lord would vindicate His Truth!

Since it is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and His glorious Gospel that is at stake here, we are commanded in the words of the Apostle to "stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."<sup>46</sup> May the God of all grace who "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"<sup>47</sup> regarding even this present perversion of the Gospel, bring forth a clarity of the Gospel in which His name will be glorified and souls will be saved.

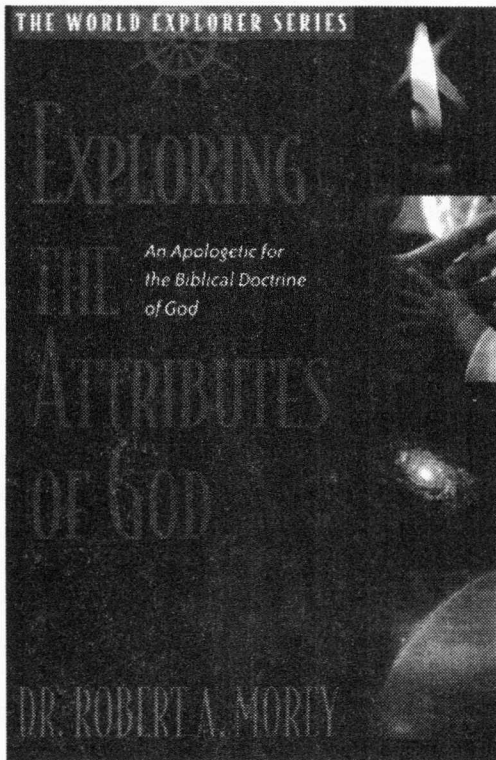
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## Endnotes

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<sup>46</sup>endnote text  
<sup>47</sup>"endnote reference"



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