

Exclusive Interview: "Grace to You" John MacArthur sermonaudio.com
Answers Common Questions

Counterfeit Christianity #1

By Larry Wessels

Bible Text: Galatians 1:6-9, Ephesians 2:8-10

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Hello, this is Larry Wessels, Director of Christian Answers of Austin, Texas, Christian Debater. Before we begin our program, I'd like to let you know that free newsletters are available from our ministry, just email us at cdebater@aol.com and give us your mailing address and we'll mail them out to you for free. You can also call us at (512) 218-8022 and leave your address there.

You can also access all our newsletters online by going to one of our three websites called biblequery.org. Once on the homepage, simply click on the "Experience" box and then scroll down to the newsletter section as shown here. Since our #1 most watched video of the over 548 videos we have produced for YouTube at the time of this recording is "Unpopular Bible Doctrines #1: The Biblical God No One Wants to Know," with over 433,000 viewings, our latest newsletter is called "Unpopular Topic: How Sovereign Is God?"

Our second most viewed YouTube video is "Six Year Old Wife of Mohammad Was Okay By the Muslim God Allah But Not By The Biblical God of Jesus," with over 341,000 viewings. We also have three newsletters available on Islam: The origins of Muhammad's religion; Using the word of God in Muslim evangelism; Reaching Muslims for Christ, Part I.

Our video, "Debate Larry Wessels vs two Jehovah's Witnesses at a university study center," currently has close to 150,000 views. See our newsletter on the Jehovah's Witnesses, "Jehovah's Witnesses: Deceived Deceivers."

Our video, "Is Jesus God Almighty in the flesh, meaning the second person of the Trinity or is he something else?" has over 101,000 viewings. See our newsletter, "Testimony to the Eternal Godhead – the Trinity."

Our video, "Biography: The famous 19th century Prince of Preachers, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a man of God," has close to 89,000 views. See two of our newsletters with lead articles from sermons by Spurgeon.

Our video, "UFOs, ancient aliens or beings of the fourth dimension #1, fact or fiction," has over 207,000 viewings. Not only do UFOs and the occult use the same disciplines such as levitation, teleportation of objects, psychokinesis, clairvoyance, automatic writing and telepathy, but their theologies are completely foreign to biblical Christianity. UFO theologies include everything from reincarnation and evolution to man achieving cosmic godhood but they do not include Jesus Christ as the only mediator between God and man, 1 Timothy 2:5. We have two newsletters related to the world of the occult to which UFOs are a part.

Our video, "Former Roman Catholic bride of Christ nun testifies of abnormal life in the convent," has over 67,000 viewings.

Our video featuring former Roman Catholic Rob Zins, who has a Master of Theology from Dallas Theological Seminary, "Historical split between Roman Catholicism and the Christ of the Scripture, man's word or God's word," has over 53,000 viewings. See our two newsletters on the subject of Roman Catholicism.

Our video, "Cult of Ellen G. White #1, beginnings of the 19th century religion called Seventh Day Adventism," has over 48,000 viewings and features former Seventh Day Adventist Wallace Slattery who has 44 years experience with this religion. Our playlist called "Dealing with Seventh Day Adventism and their prophetess," features 15 videos with 14 hours of material. See our newsletter, "Seventh Day Adventism, true or false?"

For theological music lovers, see our video, "Favorite old time Christian bluegrass Gospel music, Psalm 98:4-5," with over 214,000 viewings. We have also posted several music videos by my own daughter, Marlena Wessels, from her cd "Win This Fight," songs she has written and performed herself. To see our music videos, please go to our main YouTube channel page, scroll down to our multiple playlists, arrow over to our playlist called "Our radio shows with national Christian authors and music vids," once there, scroll down to the bottom of the playlist where the music videos are listed.

I could go on and on but this should be sufficient for now. Don't forget to check out our main YouTube channel CAnswersTV which stands for Christian Answers Television also which has over 19 playlists by topic as you scroll down our channel page.

Now on with our main presentation.

Hello, this is Larry Wessels just wanting to say before we begin this exclusive videotaped interview with Pastor John MacArthur that I would heartily recommend the teaching ministry of this great man of God. His ministry, "Grace to You," is one of the best out there. Someone who has been born again by the Spirit of God, Romans 8:1-17, recognizes immediately that Pastor John MacArthur has been supernaturally born again by his faithful exposition of Scripture. I, myself, have benefited greatly from his teaching ministry.

This particular interview is exclusive to our ministry due to the fact that years ago Pastor MacArthur was at a conference in Dallas dealing with Roman Catholicism and while there he agreed to this session with our camera crew. Unfortunately, this video footage was hidden away in storage until recently discovered by our video man. John MacArthur, as well as many other conference speakers, agreed to videotape interviews with us such as John Ankerberg; former Roman Catholic priest for 22 years, Richard Bennett; Dave Hunt; and various other Christian authors, speakers and theologians. We will eventually have all these interviews uploaded onto our YouTube channel CANSwersTV and they can be found on our playlist located on our CANSwersTV channel called "Dealing with Roman Catholicism, idolatry and the virgin Mary," which has 94 videos and counting at the time of this recording.

As we prepare to hear John MacArthur, check out a video on YouTube he has done called "John MacArthur: What has happened after the 'Strange Fire' conference" when you have a chance. John MacArthur's "Strange Fire" conference exposed the charismatic movement for what it is, which fuels the phony word-faith movement and signs-and-wonders modern day prophets who infest the TV airwaves. The modern evangelical church readily accepts religious frauds as much as they accept the false Gospel of Roman Catholicism and the main reason for this is the fact that much of what is called evangelical Christianity is not biblical Christianity at all but just another phony form of it.

For more on this, please see our video, "Sad state of the church: 87% of evangelical Christians don't know what Gospel justification is." Most people just don't like the true biblical God as he has revealed himself in Scripture and choose rather to believe about God whatever makes them feel comfortable. Isaiah 30:9-13,

9 That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: 10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: 11 Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. 12 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: 13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.

The Counterfeit Christianity of Roman Catholicism
John MacArthur Answers Questions about Roman Catholicism
Conference Series Part One

John MacArthur. Now the question is does church history support the Roman Catholic Church? Well, I think the appropriate answer to that is Roman Catholic Church history supports the Roman Catholic Church. Obviously they have their own history but to say that all of the history of the church unanimously comes behind Rome is not true. I think

you can show in the church fathers that there was a clear understanding of justification by grace through faith alone. I think you can show in the fathers that there was no commitment, say to the papacy, there was no commitment to Mary, to various things that the Church does in the Mass, etc. etc. So, no, you can't say that the Roman Catholic system is universally supported by the history of the church. Furthermore, throughout the years of the Roman Catholic monolith in the Western world there were always dissenters, there were always those who upheld the true faith whether you were talking about Waldensians or Anabaptists or Huguenots or whatever it was, there were always those groups who really were the remnant of those who held to the true New Testament Gospel.

Do the early church fathers have unanimous agreement on the doctrine of the Catholic Church? Absolutely not. Somebody said years ago and I think there's a certain amount of truth, you can prove almost anything by going to the church fathers because there's so much diversity and because you don't always know the context, you can take what they say and send it one direction or another.

But how could the early church fathers support unanimously the doctrines of the Catholic Church when the doctrines of the Catholic Church didn't even develop until after the church fathers. I mean, there are so many components of Catholicism that came after the church fathers. In the councils, say from 325 to 725, there were solid things that were decided that the church fathers would agree on, things that had to do with Trinitarianism and the deity of Christ and things like that, but all kinds of things developed in Catholicism over time that the early church fathers don't even address.

Is there such a thing as apostolic succession and does it prove that Rome is a true church? That's easy to answer: there is no such thing as apostolic succession. It cannot be proven at all. In fact, the apostle, it is a self-contained group. We know exactly who the apostles are because they were witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Even the Apostle Paul feels a little bit guilty in calling himself an apostle so he has to say, "I was an apostle sort of born out of the normal time. I'm sort of a late entry, an addendum to the whole thing." But he understands the nature of that apostleship is that he, himself, has also seen the resurrected Christ and I think when you have the end of the ministry of the Apostle Paul, clearly you have the terminus point of the apostolate. There is nothing in the Bible to justify any kind of extension of the apostolate beyond that, especially the fabrication that somehow the apostolate winds up in Rome and belongs to a pope. No one could be an apostle who hadn't seen the risen Christ. That was a qualification given clearly in the New Testament.

Is there any circular reasoning in saying that the Catholic Church is infallible? Well, of course there is. You know, they've got you in a corner because if you say that they're infallible, then you sort of, that's a presupposition. They can't prove that because that, in itself, is a statement that's subject to scrutiny. It's clear that they're not infallible because they're in error about so many doctrines. They misrepresent the New Testament. They teach a wrong doctrine of salvation. Clearly they're not infallible. To say that, "I accept the infallibility of the Church," is to accept a statement by a fallible organization that they're infallible. I mean, just look at the history of the Church. The fallibility of the

Roman system ought to be very clear they are doctrinally in error; that the system is full of scandalous conduct from the papacy on down; they have misrepresented history; they literally massacred true believers, etc. etc. etc.

So what you've got is you've got a fallible system claiming infallibility and people just accepting that claim as some kind of an established presupposition. Obviously the Church is not infallible but they want to establish their infallibility because then they're in control of everything. So if you grant them that, that's the end of the discussion.

I think the definition of a church is simply the assembly of believers. It doesn't define an institution of any kind of human structure or perpetuity. It only describes the assembly of believers. There is a physical element of the church in when believers actually physically get together. There is a spiritual component of the church and that is the spiritual body of Christ, the assembling together on a spiritual level of believers of like-minded faith, but beyond that the New Testament doesn't define the church in any institutional way.

No. Does the lack of central authority in the diverse Protestant church prove the need for a monolithic central authority such as in the Roman Catholic Church? I understand why the Catholic Church wanted to hold onto its authority. They did fear what would happen if there was autonomy and there were some things that they feared that were true. Without a central authority, you know, you can have essentially no control. We do have that in Protestantism. I think the latest count is 28,000 Protestant denominations and each of them must have some justifying nuance, some variation that causes them to exist. I understand that and I understand it would be an awful lot better if the church was gathered into one great body, but that has nothing to do with a presupposed authority, that has to do with accuracy connected to the word of God. The church can't rally around some self-appointed central authority, the church has to come back to the truth of Scripture and the only thing that can really unite the church is a common belief in the veracity and the accurate interpretation of Scripture.

Well, yeah, the question is, you know, why are we so as Protestants, so fixed on the idea that the Scripture alone is our authority because Roman Catholics say there's nothing in the Bible that forbids an additional authority? Well, first of all, that's an argument from silence. To say that you are mandated by something the Bible does not say is really ridiculous, I mean, because there's no end to what the Bible does not say. You could invent all kinds of things the Bible does not say. You can't use that as a basis for divine authority.

The Scripture, however, on the other hand, claims to be the only authority. I mean, you have statements, for example, at the end of the book of Revelation it says, "If you add anything to this book or take anything away from it, it shall be added to you the plagues that are written in it." That's pretty explicit. You have, I think that wonderful statement in Jude that, "This is the faith once for all delivered to the saints," you have a faith packaged by divine revelation once for all delivered. It doesn't keep going and keep going and keep going. That is one of the severest errors in Roman Catholicism is that they don't have any end to the true canon of divine revelation, it just keeps going and going and going, and

that's their affinity with the charismatic movement, where you continue to have people having revelations and revelations and revelations and revelations. They, too, do not understand the uniqueness of Scripture which I believe is the only divine revelation and authority for the rule and practice of life in the church.

When tradition contradicts Scripture, which has the authority? And the answer, of course, is Scripture, and I think Matthew 15 is a very very important passage in that regard. Jesus indicts the Pharisees and he makes a very specific indictment, he says, "You have substituted the traditions of men for the commandments of God." That's exactly what Judaism had done. Judaism is a very good parallel to Catholicism because there was revelation there, Old Testament, but there was massive tradition there and the tradition was used in two ways: it was used to add to the revelation and to interpret the revelation. The tradition would be the Mishnah, the codification of Jewish law, Rabbinical interpretation, etc. So you've got this true revelation in with the Old Testament, and then you've got this mass of material which essentially sort of relates to the magisterium in Catholic tradition. It's this accumulated stuff that interprets the Old Testament and establishes tradition and by the time you get to Jesus, the truth of the Old Testament has been totally obscured and lost in the confounding machinations of all this tradition, and essentially that's what Jesus confronts. He says, "You know, you've totally obliterated the commandments of God by your traditions," and essentially that's what's happening with the Catholic Church.

Does the Bible teach anywhere that traditions are inspired or sufficient? No, the Bible never teaches that traditions are inspired. The word of God is inspired and that's all. Traditions, which are basically devised by men at some point in history, have nothing to do with the revelation of God. The revelation of God is once for all delivered to the saints, it is comprehensive, it is complete, it is finished with the book of Revelation, don't add anything, don't take anything away, this is it. Traditions are simply the inventions of men that embellish the word of God or add to the word of God as time goes on. There is no comparison between the two.

Simply the true Gospel and I think maybe the best way to say it is to understand 2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made him who knew no sin, sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him." That's the Gospel and I think it needs to be understood in this context, the context of 2 Corinthians 5 is the context of reconciliation. Five times from verse 18 to 21 the word "reconciliation" is used in some form, and what the passage is saying is the good news is that sinners can be reconciled to God. Okay, that's the good news. They've been alienated. They're enemies and hell awaits the enemies of God but reconciliation is possible and God has devised it. God is the author of this reconciliation, that's why Paul says in verse 18, "All things are from God who is reconciling sinners to himself, who is reconciling the world to himself."

The uniqueness of the Christian Gospel is that God is the reconciler. Man can't do that. We can't say, "Well, I want to reconcile with God so I'm gonna come up with a plan of reconciliation." I can't appease the wrath of God. I can't satisfy the righteousness of God, the holiness of God. I can't sort of set his justice aside somehow so that he'll embrace me.

I can't do that, man can't do that, yet every religion in the world is a system by which men attempt somehow to reconcile with whatever gods or god is in that religion. For example, in Israel you get a picture of the gods of the nations, they go from apathetic to violent or hostile typically. You could take the god Baal who seems to be apathetic because Elijah says maybe he's sleeping, you know, maybe he's on vacation, you better yell a little louder, and the best that can be said about Baal is he's indifferent. And having an indifferent God isn't too bad, at least he's not breathing down fire and threatening to incinerate you, but it's kind of tough when you need him because you can't find him. But on the other hand, in Israel for example, you have Molech. Molech is not apathetic. In order to pacify Molech and keep him from destroying you, you have to take your newborn baby and incinerate your baby on a fire. That's offering your child, passing your child through the fire to Molech. So you have a spectrum there from apathetic or indifferent to violent and that's where the gods of the nations fit. They all run on that spectrum. Never in the history of the world has there been a God who by nature is a reconciler except in the true Christian faith. God, the true God, is the only reconciler. He's the only God crying about sinners. He's the only God who sends the message that, "I want to be reconciled." He's the only God who says to the first sinner after his first sin, "Adam, where are you?" and launches the whole effort of reconciliation.

So what you have, the good news here is, and the Catholics miss this altogether, they've got God as a tough guy, really a tough guy, you don't want to go to him; and even Jesus is a tough guy, you don't want to go to Jesus because Jesus might just be either indifferent to you or really upset. So you'd better go to Mary because Mary's sweet and she's nice and even Jesus can't resist her, so go to her and she'll go beg Jesus, convince Jesus and Jesus will get the Father to save you. Nothing could be a more bizarre and untrue representation of the nature of God. God is the Savior of all men. By nature God is a reconciler. Even sinners, even the ungodly who hate God feel the reality of his saving nature. How? The rain falls on the just and the unjust. The fact that a sinner takes one breath after his first sin is evidence that God is by nature gracious, he's by nature merciful. That's why 1 Timothy 4:10 says he's the Savior of all men. Temporally, in time, he shows his saving nature. That's why Romans 2, the forbearance of God, the patience of God.

So I think to understand the Gospel, you have to understand that God is by nature a reconciler and you see it in Jesus who comes to seek and to save the lost. You see it in Jesus crying over the city of Jerusalem saying, "You will not come to me that you might have life." You see it in Jesus when he says, or God when he says, "Why will you die?" I mean, God is by nature a Savior and I think Roman Catholic theology completely misses that. You don't have to beg God through Mary, or beg Mary through some saint, or beg Jesus through some saint to get to God to somehow appease God. God is by nature a Savior and Incarnate God, Jesus Christ, obviously is the Savior who pleads with sinners. And you have in that same passage, 2 Corinthians 5, the Apostle Paul says that, "God is begging you through us to be reconciled to him." That's an amazing statement. God is begging sinners to be reconciled to him.

Now that's the good news, that you can be reconciled. Now the only way that can happen, according to that passage, is if God does not impute their trespasses against them. God is holy, God is just, he's got a problem here. He's a Savior by nature, he desires to save sinners, the only way he can do it is by not imputing their trespasses against them. That is to say, he can't hold them against them; he can't indict them for their sins; he can't credit them to their account. But how is he gonna do that? How is he gonna get rid of that problem because he's a just God? Answer, verse 21: he made him who knew no sin, sin for us. What he did was indict Jesus for our sins. To put it simply, here's the good news: on the cross, God treated Jesus as if he had personally committed every sin ever committed by every person who would ever believe, though in fact he committed none of them. That's how he was made sin. Only in that sense. He didn't become a sinner. He was made sin only in the sense that God treated him as if he had personally committed every sin ever committed by every person who would ever believe, though in fact he committed none of them.

That's the doctrine of substitution, so that Jesus literally dies under the full fury of God against every sin ever committed by every person who would ever believe and justice is satisfied at that point, and the good news then, is then that he bore in his body our sins on the cross and that's a done deal. That's a settled fact. It's not in question. We don't have to wait until after death to find out if it happened. We don't have to do something along the way to activate some elements of that offered salvation to make it ours. We don't have to cooperate with, by some infused grace with what God is doing. It is a done thing. Christ pays the penalty in full. That's justification by grace and it is apprehended by faith. We simply accept it by believing it.

Then the rest of the verse which I think is so monumental says that we might be made, now Christ was made sin, same verb, that we might be made righteous, the very righteousness of God in him. That, too, is an incredible statement. If you've ever wondered, for example, why Jesus lived 30 years, obscure, nobody was commissioned by God to write any of it down, one little incident at the age of 12, other than that we don't know anything about 30 years. I suppose if I'd have been God I could say, "You know, you need to go down and die for sinners but I only need you for the weekend. You go down on Friday, you die, you're back Sunday afternoon." You know, there's some truth that that could work because, really after all he did have to do was take the wrath of God for sinners and he could have done that on the weekend. The question is why did he live a full life? Why did he live 33 years? Answer: because he said as he told John the Baptist, "I must fulfill all righteousness." Here's the point: he needed to live a perfectly righteous life so that that perfectly righteous life could be credited to your account.

To understand the good news is this: on the cross, God treated Jesus as if he lived your life so that he could treat you as if you lived his life. That's the remarkable doctrine of imputation, our sins imputed to him, his righteousness imputed to us. God treats him as if he lived our lives, treats us now as if we lived his. That's the good news and there's nothing of works in it. It's all of grace. It's all of faith. And it's all accomplished by Christ.

Well, Rome's gospel is different than the Gospel of the Bible because Rome's gospel assumes human cooperation. Essentially what happens in the gospel of Rome is you have infused grace, there is a grace that is infused into a person, I think initially at infant baptism there's an infusion of this grace. Sequentially, there are other infusions of this grace; at the Mass, at any of the Catholic ordinances, the grace is infused. That's why, you know, they used to say of a devout Catholic, he went to church every day. You know, the idea was every time you go, you get some infusion of grace. And but that infused grace which is in you, given by God, if you cooperate with it, puts you on a path of justification, justification not then being an act accomplished by substitutionary death in Christ, but justification being a process and as you cooperate and do what you can to avoid venial sins and mortal sins and go through the confessions and penance and all of that, as you go through the process, you're sort of working your way along with this infused grace, you're cooperating to carry off this justification process. Bottom line, you don't know whether you ever get there, probably you won't so you'll have to go to purgatory and when you go to purgatory, there'll be some, there's a price to pay, you've got to stay there a while until the process gets completed, until you get purged, and when you've been purged of any remaining problems and you finally reach the point of justification, you can get elevated into heaven. Not at all what the Bible teaches.

How do the teachings of the Mass, purgatory and good works take away from the Gospel of Christ and the finished work of Christ? Well, obviously if you add any component other than what Christ did, you've confounded the Gospel. If there's any works in there at all, Paul says to the Romans, "Grace is no more grace." It's all of Christ and as soon as you add the Mass as some component that infuses something into us with which we cooperate, now you've got us involved. As soon as you add purgatory, you're really saying Christ didn't do the work. Justification is not a completed thing. And of course, that's the big difference. We believe justification is a divine act by which God in a moment, as it were, declares the sinner righteous on the basis of what Christ has already done because Christ has already received the full fury of God for all his sins. The Roman systems says, no, justification is this process that's ongoing and ongoing and ongoing and is related to the finished work of Christ but the finished work of Christ was not sufficient to complete it without your cooperation or some, I guess, extraterrestrial purging.

Well, James 2 is often used by Catholics to indicate that works are a component of salvation but, of course, James 2 is not talking about justification and the term is never used there. James 2 is simply talking about evidence of salvation. Faith, he says, that you claim is to be supported by how you live. I mean, if any man is in Christ, he's a new creation, 2 Corinthians 5:17. Jesus in John 8 makes a great statement in verse 32, he says there were some people who believed on him and he says, "If you continue in my word, then you're my real disciple." I mean, if there's been a transformation, there's gonna be a manifestation. You know, dogs bark and cats meow and cows moo, in other words, there's a natural response to who you are and if I'm a Christian, then I'm gonna behave like one because it's my nature. And that's all James is saying, James is just saying don't claim faith in Christ and then show me a life that doesn't evidence that. Faith without works is dead in the sense that it's non-existent because if it's genuine saving faith, it's gonna show up in how you live your life.

What is the difference between justification and sanctification? Justification is an act by which God at a moment declares a sinner righteous. Literally at that moment that sinner passes from death to life, from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son. He is commuted as to his sentence to hell and he is granted eternal glory in heaven. That is an act by which God declares the sinner righteous on the basis of no merit of the sinner but because Jesus actually paid the penalty for all his sins. His sins then being paid for, God is free to grant him the righteousness of Christ. That's justification. Sanctification starts at that point because certainly the sinner is set apart, which is what sanctified means. He's set apart by that justification from sin. Sanctification starts at that point but continues through all of life, a process by which that sinner is increasingly obedient, increasingly shaped into the very image of Christ. Then glorification is the consummation when we lose the unredeemed flesh, when we lose the sinful nature and are taken into glory. So that salvation comes in three parts: justification, sanctification and glorification. Paul talks about all three in Titus 1. He says that his ministry was for the faith of God's elect, that's justification so that the elect can hear the Gospel, believe and be justified. And it was for the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, that's sanctification. And that it was for the hope of glory, that's glorification. So as has been often said, in justification you're saved from the penalty of sin, in sanctification from the power of sin increasingly as you grow in holiness, and glorification from the presence of sin. Those are the three clearly defined components that make up the full salvation.

Rome does preach a false gospel. There's no question about that because Rome denies the great cardinal doctrine of the Gospel, justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. It is a false gospel, therefore, it is a damnable heresy. It is teaching that prevents people from being saved in the sense that no one can be saved who believes Roman Catholic theology of the Gospel. A Roman Catholic can be a Christian but not if he believes Roman Catholic theology of the Gospel. And there, I'm sure, are some Roman Catholics, Roman Catholic only in the sense that they're in the Church, who don't even know the doctrine of the Church, but to say that one believes Roman Catholic theology and could be a Christian is not true.

Over half of our church are new Christians. Maybe if we have 10,000 people, well over 5,000 people in our church would be new Christians. The vast majority of those people are Roman Catholic, ex-Roman Catholics. It's the most fertile soil I've ever found for evangelism. The reason? They already believe in the Trinity. They already believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, the deity of the Holy Spirit. They already believe in the need for salvation. They're already worried about hell and would like to go to heaven and they're desperate, many of them are desperate because they cannot find peace, they cannot find God, they do not know Christ and they know that. They have no victory over sin. They live with fear. They have no hope to know they're saved. And they find their way to the true Gospel and it's tremendously liberating and joyous to them. I think, I think to say that we need to evangelize Roman Catholics is very obvious because they need to be saved. Beyond that, I think they are a fertile fertile ground for effective evangelism but I think the tragedy of tragedies is to recast them as Christians already in the kingdom. That's a frightening thing.

Well, what about Roman Catholic baptismal regeneration? It's just another one of the components that introduces works into salvation. Baptism is a response that the believer makes to salvation. Having been saved, you publicly confess your salvation through the symbolism of baptism, immersion, where you picture in that wonderful ordinance the death, burial and resurrection that you've enjoyed in Christ spiritually by faith, and you rise to walk in newness of life, in the terms of Romans 6. I think baptism follows conversion. It's not a human work that effects conversion or that produces conversion as Rome and others have said.

Can a person be saved without being water baptized? A person can be saved, yes, without being water baptized. A person can't be, however, obedient to the Lord at that point without doing it. You could be saved without it, in fact, everybody is saved without it. I mean, everybody who's saved is saved without water baptism. Water baptism doesn't have anything to do with you being saved. It is an act of obedience, however.

I think being baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit is a spiritual reality. It doesn't have anything to do with water baptism. It's Christ literally placing you into his body, the church, the mystical church, if you will, the church militant, the spiritual entity that is the body of Christ. I think that's that divine miracle by which we are joined to the Lord as 1 Corinthians 6 says, he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit and all being one spirit in the Lord, we are joined to each other and we share the common faith.

If you're a Roman Catholic and you're viewing this video, I want you to know that you believe so many things that are right, you believe that God is a Trinity, you believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, the deity of the Holy Spirit, you believe in the Scripture, you believe in faith, in grace, you understand heaven and hell to some degree. Do you know what is frightening to me about that, John Bunyan said in the great "Pilgrim's Progress," for some people the entrance to hell will be from the portals of heaven, and what he meant to say by that was that there are some people who think they're on the path to heaven, they're moving in that direction only to find out they're gonna wake up eternally in hell. There are some fatal fatal flaws, fatal lies that have found their way into the Roman Catholic system and those are the things that cause you the great emptiness of heart, those are the things that maybe you can't identify the lie specifically but those are the things that cause you not to have peace, not to have joy, not to have confidence, not to know where you're gonna go when you die, to live out of fear, to have guilt and shame and very often it's not relieved. Those are the things that raise all kinds of questions in your mind and the answer to that is to realize that you can make no contribution to your salvation. The true Gospel is that Jesus did it all. Just acknowledge that. Just, just believe that Jesus died and paid the penalty for every sin you will ever commit and that the justice of God, the wrath of God was fully satisfied when he poured out his fury on Jesus, and if you'll just ask, he will forgive all your sins permanently, totally, because Jesus paid the price for them already. He'll forgive them all if you ask. Accept that complete and free forgiveness and embrace Jesus Christ by faith and accept the grace that he provides for you in his death.

Has the Roman Catholic Church changed since Trent and Vatican II? As far as I'm concerned, from what I understand about the Roman Catholic Church, material written long ago and being written now, the Roman Catholic Church has not changed really at all since the Council of Trent. It would be very hard to change since they're infallible because if they changed, they would have to admit that something wasn't right in the past. They can't do that. On the surface, maybe their marketing strategy has changed but their essential theology hasn't changed.

Are Roman Catholics our brothers and sisters in Christ? No, they're not. Roman Catholics are not brothers and sisters in Christ. No one is a brother or sister in Christ who isn't in Christ and you can't be in Christ if you believe in salvation by works. The truth of the matter is Roman Catholics are connected to a surrogate Christ, not the real Christ. They're connected to the Church which is a surrogate Christ and they're not in the family.

Well, what's wrong with the ECT document? I mean, what is wrong with it is that it portrays Roman Catholicism and evangelical Christianity as partners in the common mission of proclaiming the Gospel and the message of God to the world. The whole idea of that document was to say we worship the same God, we are on the same mission, we believe the same things, let's all get together and work hand-in-hand, and that is not true. While there is common ground morally and ethically, etc. and even theologically, you have believers and non-believers. You have those who preach the true Gospel, evangelical Christians, and those who preach the false gospel, Roman Catholics, and there is no possibility of those two coming together. In fact, the Apostle Paul said to the Galatians, "If anybody preaches another Gospel, let him be accursed."

So how can we embrace that as if we are engaged in a common mission? That was the really frightening thing about the ECT document, that it tried to bring the false gospel and the true Gospel together as if they were essentially the same or compatible and I think, sad to say, so many evangelical people accepted that and jumped on the bandwagon because of the people who signed it, and said, "Isn't this wonderful? Isn't this great? We're all one." And the clear lines of distinction between the truth and lies, at least in their mind, were blurred.

If you are, I guess what we could call an ecumenical evangelical, I think you put yourself in a very dangerous place. As we've tried to point out, Roman Catholics who believe Roman Catholic theology believe a false gospel. You can't embrace them. You do have an opportunity to embrace them in love and give them the true Gospel and call them to faith in Christ and call them to repentance, but we aren't on the same mission. We don't even serve the same King. The true Gospel serves the Lord Jesus Christ. The false gospel serves Satan. You know, we can't walk together in that kind of condition. Christ and Belial have no accord, the Apostle Paul says.

This is a gravely serious matter. It would be one thing if we had a difference about a form of baptism or church polity or some nuance of theology. We're talking here about the Gospel which is at the heart and soul of what the church is in the world to do and it's a tragic tragic thing for evangelicals to embrace the Roman Catholic Church as if we were

sharing a common mission. What you want to realize is that your mission is to bring the true Gospel to Roman Catholics as well as everybody else so they can come to faith in Christ.

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Larry Wessels. Hello, this is Larry Wessels, Director of Christian Answers of Austin, Texas, Christian Debater. My daughter Marlena has come out with a Christian music cd entitled "Win This Fight," it has eight songs that she has written and performed herself. Some of the song titles are, "Win this fight; Love song to my Lord; Vessel to you; Waiting to hear from you; Jesus is," and others. YouTube viewers can listen and see Marlena's music video, "Jesus Is," right now free, just type Marlena Wessels in the YouTube search box and click on her video on the page that comes next. If you would like more information about getting a copy of her cd, just email us at cdebater@aol.com or give us a call at 512-218-8022. Thank you and may the Lord bless you and yours.