

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Roman Catholicism and Early Church Leaders?

Roman Catholicism and Early Church Leaders? - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/7/17 22:15

At the outset of this thread I'd like to make a sincere disclaimer. I am not starting this thread to start a debate full of strife or discord among the brethren. I simply thought it would be good for us to think through this issue a bit and respectfully discuss it amongst us.

These are some thoughts that came to mind, some of my current views or leanings on this:

The RCC, as an official system of religion, is seriously heretical and a cult by definition. This is clearly seen in reading the Catholic Catechism, the official RCC statement of faith.

That being said, I believe there are some true believers within that system, like there are true believers within other heretical systems such as the Word of Faith prosperity gospel movement. As such I would never recommend for any true believers to remain within such a cultish system but to immediately come out of it. I would lovingly try to warn them regarding it.

Regarding the Early Church Fathers, I understand that the earlier the better. However, it seems clear that it didn't take that long for early church leaders to come up with serious aberrations from the faith once for all delivered to the saints. For example, this article shows how some of the apostolic fathers believed and taught on purgatory: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Purgatory#Purification_after_death

I would not question the salvation of some of these church fathers solely based on their embrace of certain heretical RC views. But I would also not recommend nor see it as necessary or that beneficial to read their writings. And I would be willing to respectfully agree to disagree with brethren who feel otherwise on some of those writings. I would only be seriously concerned if it is implied we can embrace the current RCC system as a true church within the Body of Christ.

All that being said, a good point has been made about how we got the canon of Scripture. And I also thought about all the essential doctrines that were defended by the early church fathers in the councils. My response regarding that would be that God used those leaders and councils to preserve His Word IN SPITE OF the serious errors within the RCC system.

Re: Roman Catholicism and the Early Church Fathers? Cultish or Not? - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/7/17 22:25

I disagree with your wording of cult. A major emphasis of a cult is doing something to force against one's will.

Quote:
 -----Specific examples of belief in purification after death and of the communion of the living with the dead through prayer are found in many of the Church Fathers. Irenaeus (c. 130-202) mentioned an abode where the souls of the dead remained until the universal judgment, a process that has been described as one which "contains the concept of... purgatory." Both St. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) and his pupil, Origen of Alexandria (c. 185-254), developed a view of purification after death; this view drew upon the notion that fire is a divine instrument from the Old Testament, and understood this in the context of New Testament teachings such as baptism by fire, from the Gospels, and a purificatory trial after death, from St. Paul. Origen, in arguing against soul sleep, stated that the souls of the elect immediately entered paradise unless not yet purified, in which case they passed into a state of punishment, a penal fire, which is to be conceived as a place of purification. For both Clement and Origen, the fire was neither a material thing nor a metaphor, but a "spiritual fire". An early Latin author, Tertullian (c. 160-225), also articulated a view of purification after death. In Tertullian's understanding of the afterlife, the souls of martyrs entered directly into eternal blessedness, whereas the rest entered a generic realm of the dead. There the wicked suffered a foretaste of their eternal punishments, whilst the good experienced various stages and places of bliss wherein "the idea of a kind of purgatory" is quite plainly found," an idea that is representative of a view widely dispersed in antiquity. Later examples, wherein further elaborations are articulated, include St. Cyprian (d. 258), St. John Chrysostom (c. 347-407), and St. Augustine (354-430), among others.

I do not see one direct quote of any of these early church fathers. And Tertullian's view seems very much like what some evangelicals interpret as Abraham's bosom. Which people interpret as "paradise" and not heaven itself because one could see the damned suffering with the gulf between.

Also I would say again you use the RCC as something that always existed since AD 100 or something early which is just not true. It would be good for you to research and guesstimate a later date of when potentially it became more of an unhealthy state.

The first actual Pope in Rome was probably Leo I (440-461 A.D.), although some claim that Gregory I was the first (590-604 A.D.).

So before that it seems there was much more health in the Church and it was the One Church where many godly bishops tended God's flock.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/7/17 22:34

I wonder just how dispensable RC Sproul would say Augustine is.

It does make one wonder why those saints much closer in time to the apostles would believe in a place of purging.

Why would that be? Sure would be nice to be able to trace back to the first person that taught this.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/7/17 23:48

Quote:

-----I disagree with your wording of cult. A major emphasis of a cult is doing something to force against one's will.

This is a definition of a cult from websters online encyclopedia:

“Collective veneration or worship (e.g., the cult of the saints” meaning collective veneration of the saints” in Roman Catholicism). In the West, the term has come to be used for groups that are perceived to have deviated from normative religions in belief and practice. They typically have a charismatic leader and attract followers who are in some way disenfranchised from the mainstream of society. Cults as thus defined are often viewed as foreign or dangerous.”

Since the RCC teaches the veneration of Mary and the saints I think it falls under that definition. Here is an entry on the cult of the saints from Britannica:

“The cult (system of religious beliefs and rituals) of the saints emerged in the 3rd century and gained momentum from the 4th to the 6th century. The bones of martyrs were believed to provide evidence of God’s power at work in the world, producing miracles and spectacles of the effectiveness of faith. The martyrs had imitated Christ even unto death, and the remains of their holy bodies were...”

The RCC also has the pope as its charismatic leader whom multitudes follow blindly and almost worship.

Quote:

-----I do not see one direct quote of any of these early church fathers. And Tertullian's view seems very much like what some evangelicals interpret as Abraham's bosom. Which people interrupt as "paradise" and not heaven itself because one could see the damned suffering with the gulf between.

I do not have much time right now to do much research on that so I’d have to get back on that. If anyone has any direct quotes feel free to share, not just on purgatory but any other RCC errors.

Quote:

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My point was that some official RCC heresies can be traced way back even to the time of the apostolic fathers. It seems that very early on they deviated from sound doctrine and created traditions of men that nullified the Word of God. As such it became a system of beliefs known as the RCC. Yes there were true believers and leaders but that does not justify their serious errors which we must renounce if we are to be obedient to God's Word.

Another point I want to make is that when the Scriptures speak of receiving traditions handed down it refers to traditions that are taught in the Word of God, such as baptism and the Lord's Supper. Not man-made erroneous traditions which the RCC holds to be equal in authority with Scripture.

Re: , on: 2014/7/18 1:23

I think we massively over simplify the claim to a heretical all encompassing Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand we may over complicate what the meaning of the True Catholic Church is. Most really well written and substantial works on the Roman Catholic Church from the Protestant genre date the real start of the RCC as a system of error to about the 6th Century and then go on to conclude that this RCC system came into its fullness in the 13th Century.

The fact that some erroneous doctrines are said to have their roots in a particular individual or at a particular time and place is mostly intellectual subjectivism based on extant manuscripts and reading between the lines. It may be a case of take it or leave it with most things. Perhaps the best approach to error is to exercise discernment here and now and spend less time worrying about how things got started.

Augustine contributed to the present Canon of Scripture from Jerusalem, which he called an "out of the way place". It is a comment of course which he wrote in a personal letter explaining what he had done in gathering a list of and copies of as many ecclesiastical writings he could find and accepting or else rejecting the obvious truth from the obvious error. Is Jerusalem an out of the way place? It was in the 4th Century and it still is if you happen to be writing with Rome in mind. Yet the Rome of Augustine's day is not the Rome of today. Not politically and not spiritually!

Everything is relative until you apply discernment, then it is either true or false according to God.

Re: , on: 2014/7/18 5:01

I agree with Andrew Kelly.

Within the Catholic Church, there have always been a section of deeply spiritual men and women who follow(ed) the traditional mystical teaching of via triplex, which is Purgation, Illumination and Union. Notice that Purgation or purgatory, is at the beginning and not the end. St John of the Cross (16th C) is amongst those. Although he was classed as a doctor of the church at a much later date, I have found that some of his teachings are at odds with the official dogma, such as when perfection comes. The official teaching is after death but John clearly taught it to be in this life. I can only assume that his writings were not studied closely or misunderstood when they were read. He was also imprisoned during his lifetime for 9 months due to his teaching.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/7/18 14:31

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Good points brother, I'll give you that. I am trying to sincerely sort this issue out a bit within my mind as one who has not studied church history that much or the early church writings. I have read very little and some of it has been very much in accordance with Scripture while other parts have been seriously concerning. The RCC tries to claim all the church fathers and their writings as part of their history and system and venerates and prays to them, while some Protestants also try to claim them. This can cause confusion, especially for new Christians. My concern is that if a new Christian starts reading some of those writings and comes across RCC error, it can be a huge stumbling block to them. We've heard of situations where some Protestants, even pastors, have joined the RCC after studying some of these writings. My reasoning here is that these writings are not equal with Scripture and should not be elevated too much, especially in light of the fact that some contain RCC error.

So far I was looking into the apostolic fathers a bit, namely Polycarp of Smyrna (65-155 AD), Clement of Rome (died 99 AD), and Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35 or 50 - 98 to 117 AD). So far I didn't find much to be concerned about, other than this quote from Ignatius on the literal body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist:

Take note of those who hold heterodox opinions on the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how contrary their opinions are to the mind of God. They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, Flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in his goodness, raised up again. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes. Letter to the Smyrnaeans, Ch 6

I felt that quote was worthy of consideration because the RCC teaching on transubstantiation is closely linked to their teaching on the mass-sacrifice of Christ. Here is an article that explains the seriousness of this error: <http://carm.org/transubstantiation>

In posting that quote and bringing that up I do not mean to completely write off Ignatius as a heretic or devalue his contribution to the Church. Again, my point is simply to say we must be very careful with these writings that are extra-biblical.

So so far it seems to me that at least the writings of Polycarp of Smyrna and Clement of Rome are very solid in sound doctrine and without any serious concern or error. I'll continue to research.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/7/18 15:11

Quote:
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This is a worthy consideration because many of the early reformers considered the eucharist (Lord's supper) something more than a symbol. Luther's view was much closer to the Catholic viewpoint. Zwingli was one of the only major teachers who denied any spiritual substance and claimed it was merely a symbol and did not put as much importance on it. So should we consider that it is biblical that there is more to the Lord's Supper than a symbol ritual that we do and that there is benefit or detriment to the taking of the Lord's supper depending in what way we partake?

I personally have always taken the Lord's Supper very seriously and treated it more than just a piece of bread, it becomes sanctified when used in holy communion and I have always felt a spiritual benefit to it when treating the time with reverence.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/7/18 15:26

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I personally have always taken the Lord's Supper very seriously and treated it more than just a piece of bread, it becomes sanctified when used in holy communion and I have always felt a spiritual benefit to it when treating the time with reverence.

While Luther did believe and teach the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, he opposed the doctrine of Transubstantiation. He wrote:

"Therefore it is an absurd and unheard-of juggling with words, to understand "bread" to mean "the form, or accidents of bread," and "wine" to mean "the form, or accidents of wine." Why do they not also understand all other things to mean the forms, or accidents? Even if this might be done with all other things, it would yet not be right thus to emasculate the words of God and arbitrarily to empty them of their meaning. Moreover, the Church had the true faith for more than twelve hundred years, during which time the holy Fathers never once mentioned this transubstantiation â€” certainly, a monstrous word for a monstrous idea â€” until the pseudo-philosophy of Aristotle became rampant in the Church these last three hundred years. During these centuries many other things have been wrongly defined, for example, that the Divine essence neither is begotten nor begets, that the soul is the substantial form of the human body, and the like assertions, which are made without reason or sense, as the Cardinal of Cambray himself admits."

Believing that Christ is really present with us in the Lord's Supper, and believing that that His literal body and blood are present as an on-going sacrifice during the RCC mass are two completely different things.

Re: , on: 2014/7/18 17:54

Mathew 24:9

Do not call anyone on earth your father, for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

Brethren this is a very, very serious admonition of Jesus. I am seeing some disturbing elements coming out in these threads. When I hear men ascribed as "church fathers" or "holy fathers" I get disturbed. And I see Roman Catholicism.

Men are not to be elevated in place of Christ. Their works are not to be elevated in place of the Bible.

There is only one authority over the church. It is Jesus Christ and Him alone. His Word is all that is needed.

Believers in persecuted lands only need Jesus and His Word. Indeed those that during the Reformation who stood for this were put to death by the institution who claimed to walk in the legacy of the so called church fathers.

From the limited selections I have read of these men I find no edification. I find much more edification in Christ and His Word.

Those in the emergent church movement are calling Francis their pope. Will this be the next step in this forum.

When I see discussions of Apostolic succession and purgatory opened up. Brethren I get worried. It makes me wonder what the Reformation was all about.

Before this forum begins an infatuation with the RCC talk to Mary Jane or Br. Frank. Their testimonies of being converted out of Roman Catholicism will be very enlightening.

My thoughts.

Blaine

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Roman Catholicism and Early Church Leaders?

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/7/18 18:36

Quote:

-----Men are not to be elevated in place of Christ. Their works are not to be elevated in place of the Bible.

There is only one authority over the church. It is Jesus Christ and Him alone. His Word is all that is needed.

Blaine,

With all due respect I disagree. The Church has always had leadership, Apostles, Elders. Though at times in persecuted contexts there is less organization out of necessity, though even in underground churches in China there is great organization in certain large house church networks, ie 1 brother on top, then many other regional leaders over the other leaders. This is simply something that happens and if we submit to Church-life in our local areas we need to be under some authority.

Early Church Fathers are not just like us in that they were leaders, most of them bishops (Elders) and led the flock of God in their day. They simply followed the pattern the Lord left of leadership over the church ie the 12 apostles (11 not counting Judas).

Quote:

-----Believers in persecuted lands only need Jesus and His Word. Indeed those that during the Reformation who stood for this were put to death by the institution who claimed to walk in the legacy of the so called church fathers.

Anabaptist groups did not consider themselves a new group but also looked to early examples. A reading of Menno Simons will show this.

ie

Like many of the Reformers, Simons' beliefs concerning church practices were affected by his in-depth search of the scriptures which started around 1526. During this time of study, serious questions arose concerning the doctrine of transubstantiation (the change of the substance of the bread and wine into the actual Body and Blood of Christ). Menno could not find any evidence of this doctrine in the Bible. He did not get very far in it before I saw that we had been deceived. He concluded that the meaning of the Lord's supper was symbolic. Infant baptism, also not found in the Bible, was another issue he had concerns about. In 1531 he discussed his issues with his pastor, searched the writings of the Church Fathers, and read the works of Martin Luther and Heinrich Bullinger. It was at this time he came into direct contact with Anabaptists who were preaching and practicing believer's baptism.

from: <http://biblicalbelievers.com/index.php/the-reformers-2/the-reformers/menno-simons/>

Re: , on: 2014/7/18 20:03

Hi saints,

I have been kind of holding back on this particular thread. Not really sure where to start. I have studied church history extensively and the early church fathers so called. I would put the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church around 312 or so, prior to that they were known as the catholics, small c. The other main group were known as the Donatists. The catholic group were also known as "traidors" a derivative of the word traitor. The word traitor meaning to "hand over." What did they hand over? Other Christians and Scriptures to the Romans under the most severe persecution which lasted about 8-10 years and started around the year 300 under Diocletian. When the persecution ended, the catholics had great favor with the Romans because they had buckled under persecution, denied the faith and had traitorously handed over brothers and sisters to be killed and Scriptures that had been hidden.

Constantine favored the catholics when he came to power over the Donatists and began to pay the "bishops," and build the churches (prior to these churches were in houses) Now, the split between these two groups was a long standing one going back into the mid to late 2nd century. The Novationists of that age complained bitterly that this catholic group had

wilted under persecution. Anyway, the Catholic church was born as an establishment under Constantine and on his payroll. This Catholic church was corrupt from the beginning and only grew worse with power, and it was not long before they persecuted and killed people from the group known as the Donatists. This is the first instances of "Christians killing Christians." And history tells us that the Catholic church would go on and kill millions of people under the guise of "The Lord's work." Just because there were genuine saints within the ranks of Catholicism prior to the Reformation, in no way legitimizes the Catholic Church. The mass is a masterpiece of Satanic counterfeit whereby Jesus is "sacrificed," anew every week. The piece of bread is Jesus to them. This is not the Jesus of the Bible. Their system of leadership owes more to the ancient mystery religions than anything that is found in the Bible.

The Catholic church maximized, to the fullest, the ignorance of an almost entirely uneducated people. This is why they had such hatred towards the "laymen," preaching. God raises up leaders, servant leaders who, first and foremost, love the sheep. This is the key identity to a leader within the Body, His love and desire to serve rather than be served. It is very rare in our denominational system to find such men. Anyway, it would take volumes to describe the corruption, from the beginning, of what we know to be the Catholic church. From Maryology to co-redemptrix to transubstantiation to purgatory to salvation by works and faith (in Catholicism one must be sanctified before one can be justified, think about that for a second) And on and on it goes, infallibility, celibacy, praying to dead saints and the like. But, praise the Lord, millions of Catholics over the centuries, by the power of the Holy Spirit have come out of this great deception. They are a testimony and a trophy of God's grace and mercy. That ones so raised and soaked in deception can find the truth and be delivered is a mighty miracle. Long may those miracles continue.....bro frank

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/7/18 20:21

Quote:

-----Mathew 24:9

Do not call anyone on earth your father, for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

Brethren this is a very, very serious admonition of Jesus. I am seeing some disturbing elements coming out in these threads. When I hear men ascribed as "church fathers" or "holy fathers" I get disturbed. And I see Roman Catholicism.

Good point brother. From here on out I will refer to them as early church leaders instead and will be changing it in the title of this thread. Hope that's ok.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/7/18 20:49

Frank---

I have a sort of strange and unsettling question for you. Not long ago I read that one of the recent popes (not sure which) was part of a high satanic mass that took place in the Vatican that included sexual perversion and child sacrifice and many other dignitaries were present. Do you know anything about this and might this be true? I think some priest named Malcolm somebody wrote a book about it.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/7/18 20:51

I think it can be very easy for us to misunderstand one another in discussing this issue, therefore the need to try to explain in our terms and make any necessary distinctions in meanings.

When it comes to the issue of church leadership, the RCC's view is radically different from the Protestant view. The RCC teaches that Peter was the first pope and that the pope is infallible and is to be highly revered as the leader of the whole Church, without question. They teach that the pope has the same type of apostolic authority as the 12 apostles. Furthermore, RCC teaches that popes and bishops and priests are to be celibate. And they teach that their extra-biblical traditions invented by church leaders are binding on God's people as much as God's Word.

The Protestant view is that there is no such thing as a pope over the whole Church and there are no more authoritative apostles as the 12, but that Jesus is the Head of the Church and every local church is accountable to Him. Christ and His Word are the final authority, not any human leaders or traditions. Yes, there are leaders in the Church but not in the same way as in the RCC. Two completely different types of leadership.

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2014/7/18 21:29

Greetings Frank

Thank you brother sharing these things here with everyone. Sadly there are many who are deceived into thinking the RC C is not so bad. Many think it just another christian church, nothing could be further from the truth. We need to pray for those lost in the lies of the catholic teaching, that their eyes be opened and they come to JESUS and repent.

You wrote:But, praise the Lord, millions of Catholics over the centuries, by the power of the Holy Spirit have come out of this great deception. They are a testimony and a trophy of Gods grace and mercy. That ones so raised and soaked in deception can find the truth and be delivered is a mighty miracle. Long may those miracles continue.....bro frank

Yes praise GOD for HIS mercy and grace and give thanks to HIM for those of us who have come to know JESUS and LORD and Savior. Amen to what you have shared and thank you.

God bless
mj

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/7/18 21:48

Quote:
-----Sadly there are many who are deceived into thinking the RCC is not so bad. Many think it just another christian church, nothing could be further from the truth. We need to pray for those lost in the lies of the catholic teaching, that their eyes be opened and they come to JESUS and repent.

Amen. I too have had some experience with the RCC though not nearly as much as you and Frank. As a kid my mom took us to both types of churches, Protestant and Catholic. It was by attending both that I saw which was closer to the truth. It seemed that in the Protestant church there was more reverence for God and His Word. When I would go to the RCC I noticed that no one carried Bibles and right after the mass people would pop open their beers on the church parking lot and start downing them right there. I know full well how serious the deception is in the RCC. It is grieving when I consider it. I know that in Protestant churches there is also deception and even in solid churches there are many who are not truly saved. But by and large there is way more serious deception in the RCC and it is filled with way more lost people, people who worship and pray to Mary and the saints and statues and practice penance and say vain repetitious prayers and confess to priests and the list goes on and on. Not too far from my home there is a big statue of Mary on a front yard and I see many groups of people standing in front of it gazing at it in deep wonder. It grieves me every time I see that.

Knowing how serious it is I want no part of it or its history.

Greg , on: 2014/7/18 22:07

I cant believe what you just wrote to Blaine.

i'm too tired to respond, properly....i'm just shocked.

Re: Greg - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/7/18 22:43

Quote:

I cant believe what you just wrote to Blaine.

i'm too tired to respond, properly....i'm just shocked.

Dear brother, I am sorry these things shock you, I am just trying to encourage saints to consider to learn from church history and not just blanket statement it as black and white, wrong and right in large sums. The early church (leaders) fathers have much to teach evangelicals.

I see the admonition to call no man teacher also not obeyed by evangelism at large. We have to really consider what the Lord was saying, many other statement of our Lord could be taken in such a way and are.

Paul called himself a father:

New International Version

1 Corinthians 4:15

Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

again I am not advocating RCC I am simply encouraging saints to learn from church history some things that evangelicals perhaps could learn. It takes humility to say we are not perhaps right or perfect in our understanding of church.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/7/18 23:24

Since I didn't find any RCC error in the writings of Polycarp of Smyrna and Clement of Rome, I am thinking it may not have been fair to include in the title of this thread, "Cultish or Not?". Therefore I will remove that part from the title.

That said, it still seems to me from the little I've read that much RCC error can be traced back to much earlier than some have suggested here. But I'll have to do more research to completely confirm that with quotes.

I know that definitely in the writings of Augustine there is much clear RCC dogma that is of grave concern and I would definitely not recommend His writings.

Re: , on: 2014/7/19 11:01

I set up a Google search protocol entitled "Are the church fathers a road to Rome?" The results were quite disturbing.

Different web sites had testimonies of evangelicals who converted to Roman Catholicism. Some were former pastors. Some of the testimonies started out with "I started reading the church fathers". The result. Those who read the church fathers were drawn to the RCC.

Brethren take heed lest you fall away from Christ and His Word.

Blaine

brother Greg, on: 2014/7/19 14:07

I'm NOT trying to start trouble, but man is NOT equal to Jesus as Pastor, or High Priest of THE Church, that is The Body of Christ....man can NEVER be equal to God, and the Pope is NOT the "vicar" of Christ as he claims to be.

you exhorted the saints

Quote:

-----I am just trying to encourage saints to consider to learn from church history

which "church" history though? if its after 315 AD?...then what?

rome?

I've read all about "rome", and its satanic counterfeit, I've read all about the forced conversions of my Jewish at rome's bloodied hand, inquisition's, the crusades. that whore in rome has killed more Jews than hitler and hamas EVER dreamed of.....then Martin Luther?....should I just say that when he wrote, "On Jews and Their Lies", he was just having a "bad day"?

There IS absolute right and there is absolute wrong

there is absolute Light--God, and there is absolute darkness---satan

White and black, there is NO grey in Christ, there is no glory in THIS flesh, and men's hearts are dark, they cant help it, we cant help it, that's why God in His Mercy gave us the Blood of Christ to cleanse all sin.

You know what Jeremiah prophesied about the heart condition of mankind:

"The heart is deceitful above all things,
and desperately sick;
who can understand it?
Jeremiah 17:9

Just for example, WHY did Martin Luther write that? Did he know that it would be used thru the centuries to engender men to kill Jews?

you speak of submission to "leadership"?.....have you seen the plethora of "spiritual survivor" blogs?...recounting abuse at the hands of dysfunctional leaders, or ecclesiastical formations.

its so grievous to read these, its so terrible to read MOST of "church history". I dream of a Church where Jesus is the Pastor...that's all I have to say on the Matter. God love you.

Re: brother Greg - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/7/19 14:28

Quote:
-----i'm NOT trying to start trouble, but man is NOT equal to Jesus as Pastor, or High Priest of THE Church, that is The Body of Christ....
man can NEVER be equal to God, and the Pope is NOT the "vicar" of Christ as he claims to be.

Brother, I do not think anyone will disagree with you here. There is a difference between a leader over a work and some one who is the "vicar" of christ in no way are we promoting this.

I am just trying to encourage saints to consider first that early church history was not all apostate before 315 AD and even after that date it seems to me not everything was 100% apostate but over time things grew worse and compromise and heresies came in slowly. So I am just encouraging against over simplification.

Just as if we look at the reformers it was not a clean black and white picture either.

In the end if all leadership was wrong and abusive in Christianity then maybe Christianity is not a true religion? We really have to temper our thinking here to realize that we might be overly judging and not seeing the good in the Christian testimony throughout the ages.

Leaders are not perfect but many in Church history were godly and lead as humble servants though having great authority and respect amongst believers.

Jesus the pastor did appoint apostles and leaders in the body of Christ brother.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/7/19 19:01

I did find this quote from Halley's bible commentary that show Innocent III as the pope that brought in most of the modern corruptions in the 11 century:

"Innocent III (1198-1216). Most powerful of all the Popes. Claimed to be 'Vicar of Christ,' 'Vicar of God,' 'Supreme Sovereign over the Church and the Word.' Claimed the right to Depose Kings and Princes and that 'All things on earth and in heaven and in hell are subject to the Vicar of Christ.'

He brought the Church into Supreme Control of the State. The Kings of Germany, France, England, and practically all the Monarchs of Europe obeyed his will. He even brought the Byzantine Empire under his control. Never in history has any one exerted more power.

He ordered Two crusades. Decreed Transubstantiation, Confirmed Auricular Confession. Declared that Peter's successor or 'can never in any way depart from the Catholic faith,' Papal Infallibility. Condemned the Magna Charta. Forbade the Reading of the Bible in vernacular. Ordered the Extermination of Heretics. Instituted the Inquisition. Ordered the Massacre of the Albigenses. More Blood was Shed under his direction, and that of his immediate successors, than in any other period of Church History, except in the Papacy's effort to Crush the Reformation in the 16th and 17th centuries.

-from Halley's Bible Handbook, page 776

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2014/7/20 21:33

I've been looking more into the writings of the early church leaders. So far I moved on to Justin Martyr (c. 100-165 AD), a writing titled Shepherd of Hermas (c 100-160 A.D.), Irenaeus (c 130 to 202 AD), and Tertullian (c. 160-220 AD), as well as other later writings briefly. I haven't read all the writings from the above mentioned leaders, since they are very extensive, but only certain ones that deal with certain topics.

In reading some of those very early writings I was encouraged to find most are full of rock solid biblical teaching and exhortation. And I was encouraged to read again about the accounts of the martyrdom of these early leaders. Those testimonies are worthy of much respect.

That said, some of those writings were very weird to me, especially the Shepherd of Hermas (which Ignatius wanted in the canon of Scripture). That particular document seemed to teach sinless perfection.

Regarding the issue of the Eucharist, so far I already shared a quote by Ignatius (c. 35 or 50 - 98 to 117 AD), a quote which RCC apologists try to claim as early proof for their teaching of Transubstantiation. Below I will post quotes from Justin Martyr and Irenaeus on the Eucharist, which also are quotes that Catholics try to use as proof texts for their teaching. I want to preface them by saying that to me, these early quotes may or may not actually teach Transubstantiation. But it sure sounds like it to me and to many.

Eventually I'd like to also deal with other issues, such as Purgatory and tracing the earliest possible writings on it, as well as coming back to Transubstantiation based on later writings, as I believe it becomes more clear because I briefly looked at some later writings.

Justin Martyr (c. 100 - 165 AD) on the Eucharist:

"And this food is called among us Eucharisti/a, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn."

Irenaeus (c 130 to 202 AD) in Against Heresies Book IV, Chapter 18 wrote, "Then, again, how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of life? L

et them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned. But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.

Again Irenaeus writes in Against Heresies Book V, Chapter 2-3 writes, "He has acknowledged the cup (which is a part of the creation) as His own blood, from which He bedews our blood; and the bread (also a part of the creation) He has established as His own body, from which He gives increase to our bodies. 3. When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made, from which things the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God, which is life eternal, which is nourished from the body and blood of the Lord, and is a member of Him?" even as the blessed Paul declares in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Ephesians 5:30 He does not speak these words of some spiritual and invisible man, for a spirit has not bones nor flesh; Luke 24:39 but that dispensation an actual man, consisting of flesh, and nerves, and bone "that which is nourished by the cup which is His blood, and receives increase from the bread which is His body."

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2014/7/21 3:16

I kind of stand between Greg's view and Christ only Authority view. A Church should always submit to elders and their direction. No question about it. The early Church Elders were such Shepards. But what is the guarantee that they were true to Jesus? Paul himself warns Timothy that after his departure savage wolves will enter the Church. What if few of them became early Church Elders and started deviating the direction from Following Jesus wholeheartedly.

Even if the early elders in Church after the apostles time (100AD to 300AD) were not as corrupted as the present RCC leaders, we can still not take their teachings as it is. Very high discernment is needed to analyse their work. I have read many of their works and frankly do not find them useful. The scripture that we have in our hand is good enough and if properly meditated we can get numerous revelation.

Re: - posted by murrcolr (), on: 2014/7/21 4:30

I guess what we should be looking for in history, is moves of God from the time of the Apostles until the 1517's the date given for the start of the reformation.

Does anyone have any historic information?

Re: , on: 2014/7/21 9:36

Sree writes.....

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Even if the early elders in Church after the apostles time (100AD to 300AD) were not as corrupted as the present RCC leaders, we can still not take their teachings as it is. Very high discernment is needed to analyse their work. I have read many of their works and frankly do not find them useful. The scripture that we have in our hand is good enough and if properly meditated we can get numerous revelation. "

Excellent observation brother. I high degree of discernment indeed. Disastarous results follow those who are not Baptized in the Holy Spirit who read and follow these writings, it often leads to Rome. "The Scripture that we have in our hand is good enough." Amen brother.....bro Frank

Re: , on: 2014/7/21 16:30

In keeping with the ambition of the OP it seems to me at least that it is reasonable to assert a claim that the early church fathers themselves provided the teachings which eventually gave rise to direct RCC heresies, if in fact we can demonstrate it rationally. Unfortunately simply saying it doesn't prove anything. Even if this claim were precisely true, unless you intend to be a traditional Roman Catholic, placing more importance on the writing of the early church fathers than is necessary, reading them will not of itself produce a Roman Catholic.

If we are seeking to establish the origins and development of the RCC, as we know it today, then it isn't surprising that those responsible for the implementation of specific heresies looked to the Church Fathers for their justification. Where else would they look. They could scarcely look to the Qur'an could they? Yet unless you can read Greek or Latin you can only take another's word that the basis for all present RCC heresy can be found in the writing of the early church fathers.

It seems that some would suggest that the way round this problem is to be equipped with discernment. I have to say that truth cannot be discerned. Only error can be discerned. Truth must be taught it cannot be discerned. If by discernment we really mean communion with God, then none need to be taught, who have true communion with God. In that sense anyone of us could come to a right and true understanding without so much as opening the page of a single book. But if what we mean is really discernment, then we are speaking about a function of the mind in submission to both the Spirit and to true knowledge. Intuition on the other hand arises out of the mind and has to do with understanding born indirectly from prior knowledge.

The whole benefit and meaning of the apostles who precede the early church fathers, is that they were taught of Christ Himself. The Lord said that he would send the Holy Spirit and that He (The Holy Spirit) would remind them of that which He (Christ) had taught them. In this sense we have the Scriptures which are reliable because they are based on the testimony of men who knew Christ. We also read that before Paul set about his ministry he went to the apostles and tested his understanding to make sure that it conformed to the other apostles yet Paul also received his understanding directly from Christ Himself. So even in Paul's case, who was not with Christ, his words were tested by those who were with Christ.

None of this has anything to do with discernment however, and to confuse the two, as though discernment is a teacher, is a false premise altogether. Discernment is not a teacher. The Holy Spirit is the One who leads men into all truth, and the Scripture is the word by which we know what Christ said according to the Apostles. If reading the Scriptures and deriving a full and complete understanding on the RCC was as simple a matter as some suggest then there could be no possible division in understanding between any christian. Yet the church is riddled with division and the basis of all of these divisions is doctrine. Even if you took the reformed churches you will find there are thousands of divisions all based on some doctrine or other.

If we insist on blaming the church fathers for these divisions then we would have to read them thoroughly to know if there is any merit to the claim. Or at least where the merit may be both in saying it and where it can be found. Unfortunately it is not possible to discern the church fathers unless you have the living word dwelling in you richly and communion with God. Discernment, nor intuition will reveal truth unless you have communion in the spirit with God who is Spirit. Otherwise we will very likely find that what we discern will prove to be misleading, or else our intuition will prove to be a poor guide.

The words of the church fathers are not canonical nor are they living words in the way the Scriptures are invested with the power of God unto salvation. So in the end if what we are left with is the Scriptures, which we take to be the living word of God, able to save, correct, instruct, train in righteousness and so on, we would have to ask can the heresies of the RCC be properly and fully discerned as some say by reading and knowing the Scriptures? After all if we are seeking to determine that the errors of Rome can be discerned by no other instrument than the Scriptures, then the Scriptures themselves would have to explicitly give instructions on the precise heresies which constitute the heresies of Rome. Either that or else the Scriptures would have to lay open before our eyes such a plain teaching in all things which address RCC heresies that they can thereafter be seen to be heresies by a pure rational means. If we do not know these things ourselves and cannot lay them out before other men ourselves, then on what basis can we say that the Scriptures has a corresponding truth to every heresy of Rome?

I believe, that in the Church fathers writings, can be found the whole of the Scriptures written out with the exception of thirteen verses. Imagine that for a moment. These men wrote out between them almost the whole of the Scriptures in their dissertations. If every single Bible were destroyed in the whole world, their writings alone would preserve all but thirteen verses.

I am not so certain that we can be so flippant in the way we dismiss their writings. I do not personally believe in reading them as though to follow their lead or even to substitute the word of God. I do read them to make a careful study of how error came into the church and to test whether the claims that all the Roman doctrines can be found in their pages. It is a curious fact however that the overwhelming number of Roman Doctrines which are called heresy did not appear until the 11th Century as formal doctrines of Rome.

The Rosary, Indulgences, repetitive prayer, the mass, confession of sins to a priest, adoration of the wafer, forbidding the scriptures, all came into practise in the 11-13 century. Purgatory, introduction of seven sacraments, the Ave Maria, the immaculate conception of Mary all came into practise and cannon between the 13-15 century. The doctrinal basis for many of these practises can be found in earlier Catholic teachings, but the practise and embrace of these doctrines was by no means truly Catholic. Purgatory can be found presented by Gregory at the end of the 6th century, yet it didn't become fully enforced as a truly Catholic doctrine until the 13th century. Papal Infallibility was first officiated into church cannon in 1870 yet the most powerful pope of all time was Innocent III in the 13th century. Where did his power lay? It was not in a claim to infallibility, it was his political standing and ability to directly set one prince against another and thus to subject to himself the greatest influence the RCC church has ever known both before or since.

Therein lies the complexity of the RCC. It finds its origins in a political relationship with the Western Empire of Rome through Constantine, and at that time the Catholic Church adopts many Roman, and therefore Pagan ideological precepts and teachings at its political heart. Yet these Pagan ideas are themselves grounded in Greek philosophical thinking.

I have asked myself the question many times why it was that in the 10-13th centuries the peculiar church which we now call the RCC came into being in the way it has done with its now familiar heresies. My thought is that it actually has more to do with ancient Greek thinking than it has to do with Roman political reality. The Greek philosophers with their Pagan embrace had more influence on the Church between the 11th and 13th Century than it had in the first three centuries of the Greek Fathers. This is because they actually understood these philosophies in the context of their direct influence and rejected them out of hand. If you study Justin Martyr and his discourse with Trypho he brings this point out very well. He doesn't condemn philosophy he simply recognises its futility in producing a true revelation of God. Yet he also acknowledges that, as in his own case before he was converted, Plato is very powerful and influential.

In the first renaissance in Europe which was driven and controlled by the Church with the development of Cathedral colleges and the expansion of scientific knowledge as well as the incorporation of eastern thinking via Byzantine, which itself was preserved in Arabic and Islamic culture and development, Rome took on a much more Greek rational line of thinking and the works of Latin Fathers such as Augustine took on much more meaning and recognition. In short the RCC has more than anything else provided the framework of neoplatonic philosophical thought giving rise to individualism and self benefit, though benefited by membership rather than by autonomous pursuits. The effect was the so-called enlightenment of Europe, yet this has in the end only led to the same Greek belief in a philosophical logos of the transcendental man reaching his own full potential of self realisation and self purpose. Today it has become relativism both in the world and increasingly in the church as well.

To argue that the RCC is somehow divorced from the ancient world therefore and stands in a unique position with regard to its understanding as well as its doctrinal expressions and developments, is almost akin to agreeing with Rome itself. It is like saying that Rome is actually the true expression of the body of Christ on the earth. In such a position it is not difficult to move into the idea that its bishop is therefore the true expression of Christ Himself. Yet I know in my conscience that Rome is in reality a means to an end and not the end itself. Its uniqueness may well be partially irresistible, but it is only unique because it is foretold as being a mother of influence with many children, and not because it is an end in itself. Rome is not the finality of this age. The finality of this age rests with Israel which is the only truly unique people and influence in the world by God's choosing. Therefore I cannot see Rome as being the concluding reality. In fact if we look at Revelation the woman who rides the beast is herself devoured.

I believe that to look into the church fathers therefore requires in the first instance a division between the Greek fathers and the Latin fathers. Thereafter in reading the Latin fathers we can more easily see where the philosophical bedrock of modernity was laid and why the present day Rome with its ecumenical powers of influence may prove to be that influence and not the ambition which it has given rise to. In that mind of thinking we may see Rome as less a matter of people, and more a matter of a system of wickedness rooted and grounded in Satanic ambition. Perhaps we may even be able to truly see its members as men and women in need of respect first of all because many have given up the universal right of individualism which this age has brought to bear, and have embraced the benefit of communion. This is a far better thing than anything the world has to offer, yet we will so easily embrace the world with its temptations and ambitions to make every man a god, and reject the people of Rome who are willing to be constrained by decency and community of purpose.

I don't say that this is of itself my ambition, but it does help me to see men and women and not false doctrines and heresies which have been pressed upon them by a working of Satan spanning more than 3500 years. We are told in the Scripture that those who make a sacrifice but neglect mercy have not seen the hand of God. I prefer mercy every time because it is God Himself who saves men and those who know His name cannot be the least to be saved if they call upon Him. Nor can Roman Catholics be rejected if their faith is truly in Christ. If we get to separating history into those we imagine were saved from those who we imagine were not, on the basis of perceived or real heresies then we will find that the overwhelming majority of those who take the name of Christ in the last 2000 years have perished because few of them had any say in their knowledge of Christ but were overwhelmingly subject to those who were over them in Christ.