

*" . . . Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error"*

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CONTENTS

2. Liberal Protestantism and the Second Vatican Council.
7. The Second Vatican Council — Its Purpose and Significance.
13. Antidote to Delusions.
14. The National Council's Honored Guests.
14. Things in Common.
16. Pertinent Questions and Answers.

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# The DISCERNER

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## LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM AND THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

*Prof. John E. Dahlin, Editor*

The first session of the Second Vatican Council has been concluded. It is altogether proper, I think, to discuss the impact it has had upon liberal Protestantism. When this Council meeting was announced a few years ago by Pope John XXIII there was quite generally a favorable response with reference to such a meeting, particularly from Protestant leaders in the World Council of Churches. In other words, it was felt that such a meeting at Rome would lead to a better understanding mutually between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

The Second Session of the Council will open in the fall, this year. Whether the coming session will be an extended one, or brief in duration, cannot be predicted at this time. The subjects for consideration on the printed agenda are numerous, and some of these may involve lengthy treatment. Only a few subjects were considered during the first session of the Council last fall. It is possible, of course, that some of the subjects may be lumped together in broad categories and not treated separately; still others may be removed altogether from the agenda during the next session of the Council.

### **Protestant Leaders Were Present At Rome**

It is a significant fact that a number of Protestants from major denominational bodies had been invited to this first session by the Pope and were present as observers. They had been invited along with Greek Orthodox leaders from the Eastern Church as well as leaders of the Russian Church. At the Third Assembly of The World Council of Churches held last year at New Delhi, India, Vatican observers were present and warmly welcomed by the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, W. A. Visser't Hooft. It should be pointed out, however, that the observers present at New Delhi and at Rome were not given a voting privilege, nor were they active participants at the plenary sessions. They did participate at various group sessions which had been arranged. They were given conspicuous places at the open sessions. In the seating arrangements they had been given great consideration. A story was passed around at Rome that a certain cardinal was dissatisfied and even chagrined that some of the top Catholic prelates were seated so far away from the Pope in the nave of the great St. Peter's Cathedral. This leader was

supposed to have muttered to a colleague these words, "If you want to get near to the Pope in the nave of the Church, you have to be a Protestant."

#### **Liberal Protestants Favor a Union**

Recent developments, while seemingly incredible to evangelicals and conservatives, do reveal that prominent leaders in Protestantism are committed to the achievement of universal ecumenicity. As recently as last year the Archbishop of Canterbury as well as the head of the American Episcopal Church had audiences with Pope John XXIII in Rome. This marks the first time that the head of the Anglican Church and the Episcopal Church here have conferred with the Pope since the historic cleavage took place more than 400 years ago. These are preliminary steps, or attempts to bridge the great chasm which has existed during several centuries.

The religious editor of Chicago's *American* said recently, "Serious minded Christian leaders are trying as never before to unify the three major arms of Christianity—Roman Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox." The editor quotes Dr. Roswell P. Barnes, who has served as the executive secretary of The World Council of Churches: "The Second Vatican Council will contribute significantly to understanding." And referring to the New Delhi meeting, Dr. Barnes said, "Protestant and Orthodox churches were brought closer together through the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in the fall of 1961." Evidently Dr. Barnes feels that the expansion of the ecumenical activity should eventually bring Rome into an orbit of external world unity in Christendom. Since Roman Catholicism is the largest wing of the forces

of external Christianity, a unity embracing it would be a great achievement in the cause of ecumenicity. Dr. Carson Blake, a leader in the National Council of Churches, said recently, "The World Council is open to the Roman Church if it wishes to join the ecumenical movement." Other nationally known liberal Protestant leaders have also expressed themselves favorably in regard to such a unity. "Roman Catholicism and Protestantism are changing—and moving toward each other," said an American member of the Vatican's Secretariat for promoting Unity. Such a statement was made by him last fall. This Milwaukee priest, Rev. Thomas F. Stransky, said further, "Reunion will be a long, difficult task, but steps are now taken towards it." According to Father Stransky there were nearly 100 non-Catholic observers at Rome during the first session of The Second Vatican Council. Dr. Edwin Dahlberg, and the late Bishop Oxnam, both of whom have headed The National Council of Churches a few years ago, have spoken in a similar vein during the past decade.

#### **Liberal Protestants Misinterpret Pope John's Words**

The most staggering fact of all is that Pope John XXIII, at the time of his assumption of the papal office, was dubbed an interim pope, or a caretaker until a younger or more vigorous leader could be selected. He was at that time approaching the four-score mark of years. Since his elevation to the papal throne, less than five years ago, he has achieved more good will among non-Catholics than any other pope in modern history. And the fact of the matter is, he has made no concession involving fundamental Roman Catholic theology. He has

chosen, nevertheless, to be much more charitable than most of his predecessors, who said bluntly and repeatedly that there was no salvation outside of the church.

In many respects the present ruling pope may be more dangerous to Protestantism than any of his predecessors, particularly because he has produced an image of himself which is highly acceptable among people of varied beliefs and ideologies. At the very outset of his reign, Pope John XXIII asked that he be known not as a diplomatic, political, or learned pope, but as "the good shepherd defending truth and goodness."

Already in four years he has welcomed to the Vatican 32 rulers, more than any other Pope, and he has received some historic papal guests: the first Greek Orthodox sovereign to visit the Pope since the last Byzantine emperor, the first archbishop of Canterbury since the 15th century, the first chief prelate of the U.S. Episcopal Church, the first moderator of the Scottish kirk, and the first Shinto high priest. Even Nikita Khrushchev sent him a greeting on his 80th birthday. Many in the Vatican thought the Pope should ignore it, but he sat down and wrote a reply: "Thank you for the thought, and I will pray for the people of Russia." Only a few weeks ago, and for the first time since Communism gained control of Russia 45 years ago, has a reigning pope received a Soviet leader. This took place when Pope John XXIII received Izvestia's Editor, Aleksie Adzhubei, who was able to carry a message directly to Moscow, because he is married to Khrushchev's daughter. During this historic visit by the Editor of the Izvestia and his wife, the two atheists bowed their heads while Pope John gave a bless-

ing. And to members of Adzhubei's party the Editor said, "It was a beautiful speech." And the head of the Communist government's official organ also said that diplomatic relations might be exchanged with the Vatican. When pressed about it further the Editor said such a diplomatic relationship was "a good idea."

The reason for my discussing these matters at length is that the present Pope has introduced an entirely new approach in dealing with Protestants and non-Catholics. It is this change which has made the Roman Church much more acceptable in the eyes of liberal Protestants than at any previous period in history. The Catholic Church will exploit this, of course, to the fullest extent possible now, and during the years that lie ahead.

#### **The Trend Within Liberal Protestantism Is Wrong**

The only possible basis of a union with Rome would be if that historic system recognized the supreme and indisputable authority of the Holy Scriptures. But in all of Roman Catholic History traditions and church dogmas have been held equal to, if not of greater authority than, the Word of God. It is idle to suppose that Rome will ever adopt the proper attitude, that is, a return to the Bible; if she did, the whole ecclesiastical system would fall apart. It should be clear to thinking people that Rome will never take steps leading to unity unless other non-Catholic bodies will accept its inflexible historic position that it is the only true church. It is true that Pope John has softened certain statements and terminologies for the sake of effect. He does not e.g., use the old papal terminology that non-Catholics are "heretics" or "prodigals." At the opening of the historic

conclave at Rome last fall, Pope John referred to such people as "separated brethren." But it might well be recognized that in his main address he desired that such should return to the Roman Catholic Church.

The general secretary of The Evangelical Alliance, Gilbert W. Kirby, made a very important statement not long ago, "The Roman Catholic Church in its present state is an apostate body, and any kind of union with that system is unthinkable unless there are fundamental changes which would bring that body into conformity with the Scriptures." Unfortunately liberal Protestant leaders do not see the true state of the Roman Church.

Recently the National Council of Churches as well as church federations in leading cities have served as hosts to a group of Russian clergymen, who have been invited to visit the United States. They have been dined and warmly welcomed as brethren. It does not occur to these liberal Protestant clergymen that unquestionably these Russian religious leaders have been granted visas for an American visit because they have been willing to make the journey as the political handmaiden of the Communist Party.

This writer is fully convinced that the present massive ecumenical program is defective in that it seeks to build universal unity within Christendom on a false or spurious concept. Christian unity is a *spiritual unity* and not external or ecclesiastical such as the kind being promoted by the liberal leaders of the present-day ecumenical movement. Such an approach, that is, by trying to get everybody in one church may appeal to the man on the street, but it is a human concept which lacks Biblical support altogether. Most of the leaders of the ecumenical movement

in America and abroad base the concept of unity on an institutional church rather than conceiving of it as primarily spiritual. Spiritual unity involves separation from all those who deny the Lord. Many of the key leaders in the current ecumenical movement are willing to dilute historic doctrinal truth for expedience.

#### **Why Protestants Should Refuse Union With Rome**

In all of its long ecclesiastical history the Roman Church has been a dictatorship. Everything is determined at the top and directives are handed down from the pope to cardinals, and to bishops and priests, and from the priests to the people. Each pope assumes infallibility and rules with despotic power. Lay Catholics have no voice in selecting priests or directing the affairs of the church. As late as 1960 the pope's newspaper *Osservatore Romano* declared: "The Roman Catholic Church commits and guides the entire existence of man." This obviously includes politics, education, and everything else on which the church chooses to legislate. So far as totalitarianism is concerned it is just as far-reaching as communism is in its sphere. In addition to its ecclesiastic functions, it is a political state. Actually its headquarters is called the Vatican State. It has its own courts, police, currency, and its ambassadors, called nuncios, at capitals throughout the world. The Roman system is not the Church which Christ commissioned before He ascended on high. It has through the centuries accumulated traditions and dogmas which are completely incompatible with the Scriptures. It is this apostate system with which liberal Protestants seek church union.

Evangelical Christians need to

give the matter of ecumenicity a priority in their thinking. It should be stated with emphasis, that the road should not be taken because it is popular or because it represents the majority opinion. In all of history the majority has been in the wrong. We should not soon forget it was the majority who crucified the Lord. In the domain of church history it has been the minority which has carried forth the true ministry for Christ. This generation needs the exhortation of the author to the Epistle of the Hebrews, who says, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13). Ecclesiastical and religious trends have been wrong in earlier generations, and it is my conviction such trends and movements of our time are spurious. From the Scripture we learn that these large-scale movements will result in a super-church. It will emerge during the end-times. It therefore behooves all Bible-believing people to steer away from this popular trend now manifested within liberal Protestantism. A massive kind of external unity of the forces of Churchianity will accomplish nothing constructive. Rather, I think, it will bring about the maturity of apostasy about which the Scriptures make so clear a reference. The large-scale interest in the Second Vatican Council by liberal Protestants is a sad commentary on the extent to which we have drifted.

#### **The Only Proper Conclusion**

It is nothing less than fantastic to believe that God can achieve His purpose through a diluted, catch-all and apostate movement which holds that Unitarians, Universalists, Greek

Orthodox and Roman Catholics can fellowship with Bible-believing Christians. By trying to do so, men are reversing the law and spirit of the Scriptures and substituting for these expediency.

Indeed it should be said with emphasis that evangelicals are not schismatics, neither are they committed to a program of splintering for the sake of disrupting relationships in religious bodies. A number of evangelical organizations have merged, and not so few large evangelical inter-denominational activities are promoted by these Bible-believing Christians. Liberals are groundless in their charges that fundamentalists are guilty of sowing the seeds of discord in Christendom. When clear issues are involved, there are no alternatives, but to stand apart from all spurious ecumenical movements.

Unity in Christ is a priceless blessing, and all born-again persons should promote a unity which is based upon a spiritual relationship in Christ. Bigotry has no place in evangelicalism. But when fundamental principles and positions are diluted for the sake of achieving external unity then we must resist such efforts. At best these efforts can only produce an artificial unity, which in turn will neutralize the effectiveness of the Gospel. The present day groups which are completely evangelical in doctrine are nearly solidly outside The World Council of Churches. It is the liberal arm of Churchianity which occupies itself with hope of achieving external unity. This is a fundamental error and will contribute to the great apostasy of the latter days.

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If you sample the word of God only occasionally, you will never acquire much of a taste for it.

## THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: ITS PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

*by Rev. Gilbert M. Beenken, Pastor,  
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In this article on the Second Vatican Council I am writing briefly under four headings: (1) A Description of the Council, (2) The Purpose of the Council, (3) Can we expect significant results from the Council so far as Church unity is concerned, (4) The Prophetic Significance of the Council.

### **A Description of the Council**

In January of 1959 Pope John XXIII, acting on what he termed "an interior inspiration of the Holy Ghost," announced his intention of calling an Ecumenical Council. The Council was finally convened on October 11, 1962, in the nave of St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. It was called the Second Vatican Council because this was the second time a council of this nature was meeting at the Vatican. In the 1600 years of its existence the Roman Catholic Church has only held twenty general councils prior to this one; thus one can understand the significance of this religious gathering.

The Pope has called this an "ecumenical" council for two reasons: (1) the word is derived from a Greek word which means "The whole inhabited earth." He has invited all of the bishops of the world who are in communion with the Pope (Roman Catholic bishops), and these bishops are in fact found all over the inhabited earth—some 2700 of them. In that sense it is an Ecumenical Council. (2) In using the word "ecumenical" he has used a term very popular in all branches of Christendom just now. It is the word that denotes oneness, union,

a world-wide church. To illustrate the popularity of this word one needs but point to the fact that in recent years the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. changed the name of its Board of Foreign Missions to "The Commission on Ecumenical Missions and Relations." Thus in the very title of this Council the Pope caused all Christian people to think of Church oneness and union—possibly of the reunion of Roman Catholics and Protestants.

While some Protestant and Orthodox Christian leaders were invited to and did attend the first meeting of the Council, they attended as observers. They had nothing to say about the proceedings of the Council. The Council's ecumenicity in reality extended only to Roman Catholics.

The first part of this Council lasted from Oct. 11, 1962, through Dec. 8, 1962. The Council is scheduled to reconvene on Sept. 8, 1963. How long the Council will continue is not known. It could go on for years, then again it could only continue for one or two more sessions. The longest Council ever held was the Council of Trent which went on for 18 years, extending through the reigns of five Popes. On the other hand, the 3rd Lateran Council in 1179 lasted only two weeks. The twenty previous Councils were in session for a total of about 30 years.

In preparation for the Second Vatican Council Pope John created 14 preparatory commissions and secretariats. In listing them one can note the scope and type of matters that have been and will be discussed at the Council. These commissions

are as follows: Theology, Missions, Liturgy, Religious Orders, the Sacraments, the Lay Apostolate, Studies and Seminaries, Bishops and Diocesan Government, Eastern Churches, Ceremonies, Mass Communications, Promotion of Christian Unity, Discipline of the Clergy and the Faithful, and Administration.

Something of the tone of the Council is set forth in the Pope's opening message to the Assembly which is quoted in part:

"Ever has the Church opposed . . . errors. Frequently she has condemned them with greatest severity. Nowadays, however, the spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity. She considers that she meets the needs of the present day by demonstrating the validity of her teaching rather than by condemnations.

"That being so, the Catholic Church, raising the torch of religious truth by means of this Ecumenical Council, desires to show herself to be the loving mother of all, benign, patient, full of mercy and goodness toward the children separated from her."

From these words it is clear that the Pope is not only a generous, jovial, and friendly person (other adjectives used to describe him are: affable, amiable, charming, patient and devout); he is also a wise man. He realizes that this is a day of tolerance and of "soft soap tactics." Protestants who for centuries were called "heretics" by the hierarchy now are called "separated children." The tone of the Council is one of moderation, cordiality, kindness. In fact, it may be that the Catholic Church is in the process of seeking the image of her present Pope for he has gone over well in the world. Those who know something about

Rome's teaching and practice are, however, "a bit skeptical of the velvet-gloved hand extended in welcome."

Ralph L. Keiper writing on this subject of the "tone" of the Council asks—"Is there a strong opposition to this tolerant trend as displayed in the opening sessions of the Council?" He then goes on to write, "Though the liberal bishops who foster this spirit of tolerance—the spirit of sweetness and light—have received the headlines, the conservative bishops are intensely at work to oppose the liberal efforts of their brethren. Church liberals have been worried by rumors that the Council may be stalled by such stand-pat conservatives as the Cardinals of the Curia and the bishops of Italy and Spain."

This brings us into a discussion of the two camps within the Roman Catholic Church. No description of the Second Vatican Council would be complete without at least mentioning that these two groups are really at battle. First there is the centralist group, the traditionalists. This group is primarily composed of the bishops of Italy, Spain and Ireland although a number of bishops of the United States are in this camp too, including Cardinal Spellman of New York. These are the old-line, hard-hitting, rigid Romans who are not much concerned about change, about relations with other Christians. The other group is called the liberals or progressives! This group is led by the bishops of France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, and Austria. These bishops are desirous of change in the Church! They desire a more significant place for the Bible and for laymen. They are concerned about dialogue and discussion with Protestants and Orthodox Christians. They



desire a decentralization of authority and a clarification of Church doctrine. They also are for a wider use of the vernacular in the celebration of the Mass and for the laity to receive the wine as well as the bread at Communion. They are for increased autonomy for bishops (which of course would loose them from the Curia).

The interesting question that revolves about the Council is who will win the contest—the liberals or the traditionalists? The answer, I feel, is that in the case of Church practices and reforms, the liberals will gain their point; but when it comes to doctrine and theology, Rome will not change.

In all honesty it must be said that the first session of the Council did not accomplish very much. In an article on the Council in *News-week* (Dec. 17, 1962) we read that only five of 73 scheduled topics were discussed. Here follows a quotation from the article naming the five topics and what was done:

*"Liturgy.* Only one of many proposals to modify the liturgy was approved, and even that one was heavily saddled with amendments.

*"Sources of Revelation.* An interpretation drafted by the Theological Commission was unacceptable to a majority of the Council fathers and was sent back to a special committee to be reworked.

*"Communications.* Proposals for better use of the mass media still require a final vote by the Council.

*"Christian Unity.* Since the subject appeared to overlap with topics to be treated later, it will have to await the second session.

*"De Ecclesia.* Including such explosive subjects as the nature of the church and the rights and

privileges of bishops, it was brought up only last week, but was promptly turned back to a commission."

One U.S. Catholic said of the Council's record: "It is a sad commentary on the Council when one-half the world does not believe in God and all it can do is add St. Joseph to the Mass."

### **The Purpose of the Council**

When the Pope first announced his intention of calling an Ecumenical Council he stated that one of its chief concerns would be the "quest for unity to which so many in all parts of the world aspire." In his messages since then he has said that primary aims of the Council will be "to bring the Church into step with modern times," "to reform the Church," and "to revise rules and regulations governing the actions of all Catholics."

I cannot help but feel, however, that 'neath the surface one of the primary purposes of this Council is to give the Roman Catholic Church a needed lift. In spite of its glowing statistics of 500 million Roman Catholics in the world not all is well with this religious giant. Dr. Lorraine Boettner in his recent and exhaustive study entitled *Roman Catholicism* writes, "Today the biggest Communist Party outside of Russia and Red China is found in Roman Catholic Italy, seat of the papacy. . . . Approximately one-third of the voters in Italy today are Communists, as are approximately one-fourth of those in (Catholic) France." He also writes: "In Latin America, where the Roman Church has been dominant for four centuries with practically no competition from Protestantism, it has had ample opportunity to bring forth the fruits of the system and there, as a Church, it has failed miserably.

About 90 percent of the people have been baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, but probably not more than 10, or at most 15, percent are practicing Roman Catholics."

A fact that not many people are aware of today is that Roman Catholicism has lost ground almost everywhere in the world except in the United States. The Roman Church is deeply concerned about Protestant in-roads, especially in Latin America. She also realizes that history teaches that she has been a poor defense against Communism.

The Pope no doubt felt that an Ecumenical Council would do something to lift the spirit of the Church, and that the publicity of such a religious conclave would do great good for the Church around the world. The pope is a wise enough judge of man to know that colored robes, regalia, and splendid pageantry effect the peoples of the World. Two days before the opening of the Council the Pope met with over 800 journalists in the Sistine Chapel. According to *Christianity Today* "90 percent of the reporters chanted the Latin responses which preceded and followed the papal benediction." The Pope reminded the journalists, as he pointed to Michelangelo's famous work of the Last Judgment, of their responsibility in causing the world to have a good opinion of the Roman Catholic Church, her institutions and teachings. This is why someone could honestly write at the time the Council was in session:

"At this present moment Rome has eclipsed Moscow, Berlin, Washington and other capitals of the world in news interest. This is because the Roman Catholic Church under the leadership of one of its most colorful and forceful Popes of modern times has called a great ecumenical council

in that city. Probably no event of our times is receiving better news coverage around the world than this council known as the Second Vatican Council is now receiving. And it may indeed prove to be one of the most far reaching events in its effects upon the religious world of modern times."

As has already been pointed out, the image of the Church that Rome wants the world to receive is that she as the kindly mother church is making a great and loving effort to show her "estranged children" that her door is still open to them. The genius of this Ecumenical Council is that the Pope has struck this master-blow when the climate in all of Christendom is one that leans toward union and ecumenism.

Another real reason for the calling of this Council is, I feel, to meet the Anti-Clerical attitude that is prevalent in the world today. The church hopes, through this Council, to convince its own laity and the world that it is not a dictatorial, fascist, totalitarian, organization. It seems to be succeeding. One Catholic has said, referring to the discussion and debate between the liberals and traditionalists at the Council, "The Council has given a death blow to the notion that the structure of the church moves from top to bottom." In my judgment one of the reasons for this open debate is to secure just such a response from the people of the church and the world. Behind all the debate—there is nevertheless—the supreme authority of the Pope, the Curia, and the hierarchy. Rome will not change its basic Church Polity! She is indeed a totalitarian organization and always will be. She may deem it wise to use a velvet glove for the present but her hand is still a hand of iron.

**Can We Expect Significant Results from the Council As far as Church Unity Is Concerned?**

The almost universal evangelical answer to this question is "no." No doubt there will be some reforms in Catholic worship, preaching, organization, and in her relationships to other Christian groups. It is believed that the Council will also probably act in favor of greater audience participation in worship, in greater use of the Bible, in greater use of the native languages of the people, and in greater use of laymen in general.

It is also generally agreed that the Roman Church will come out of this Council with a more kindly and tender image. It also will probably leave the door open for further dialogue with Protestants and Orthodox Christians concerning ecumenicity. However, so far as actual movement toward unity is concerned, Rome's doctrinal rigidity will close the door. In this deciding realm Rome's Motto is *Semper idem*—"Always the same." There will be no change (at least in the direction of evangelical Christianity) in the four important areas of Authority, Mariolatry, Soteriology, and Church and State. One of Rome's most liberal Cardinals, Cardinal Bea, has said that the Church cannot make any concessions in the realm of doctrine.

In the area of authority Protestantism has historically held that the Bible, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, are the alone and final authority for faith and life. Roman Catholics, on the other hand, hold that the Roman Catholic Church is the final authority. As such the Bible is inspired because it is a Roman Catholic product but so are the papal pronouncements and all the tradition of the Church. Thus when these pronouncements

and traditions do not agree with the teaching of the Bible they are considered of equal weight and importance. This Catholic view of the Scriptures, as only one of the revelatory instruments, robs the Bible of its authority and hopelessly divides Roman Catholicism from Biblical Protestantism. Someone has well written of the Council, "When the months of work and the millions of words are finally distilled in concrete changes, the crux of the whole matter probably will still be whether Christendom has an infallible Pope or an infallible Bible."

In the area of Mariolatry, Romanism is once again hopelessly separated from historic Protestantism. Herbert H. Ehrenstein has said that from the unadorned New Testament picture of Mary being a quiet, humble woman, "Roman Catholicism has built the fiction of the Immaculate Mother of God, Queen of Heaven, Co-Redemptrix, Way of Salvation, Empress of America, Mother of the United Nations, Conqueror of the Devil and Life of the World. Without the slightest genuine Scriptural warrant, papal action has decreed that the Virgin Mary was free from original sin, able to intercede for mortals, and bodily ascend up into Heaven to her Son's right hand." No Catholic teaching other than the infallibility of the Pope is more repugnant to Biblical Christians than the worship of Mary. So long as Rome gives this undue emphasis to Mary (many Catholics pray more to Mary than they do to God) there is no possibility of unity between Rome and Biblical Protestantism. That Rome is not ready to give up her Mariolatry is evidenced by the fact that Pope John XXIII designated October 11, the feast of the maternity of Mary, as the opening day of the Council. The Pope declared that the

main reason for picking that date was to link the Council to the memory of the great Council of Ephesus (which began October 11, 431 A.D.). This Council proclaimed the Virgin Mary as the "Mother of God."

As to Rome's teaching on Soteriology (the doctrine of Salvation) it basically holds that only Roman Catholics can enter Heaven. "A side door to the kingdom is left open for non-Catholics who are 'invincibly' ignorant and therefore would be Catholics if they were not so stupid. Hence—the only salvageable Protestants are the morons, who cannot perceive the logic of faith." (E. McLaughlin in *People's Padre*). The Roman Catholic principle is *extra ecclesiam nula salus* . . . "outside the Church there is no salvation." Though the Romanists soft-pedal this idea in certain areas like the United States it is nevertheless at the very heart of their system. It is the only logical end of their whole system of salvation which teaches that the saving merits of Jesus can only be received through the Catholic Church, its priests, and its sacraments. How different is the teaching of John 1:12, 3:16, and I John 5:12. The Catholic doctrine of Soteriology once again voids the possibility of union between Biblical Protestants and Roman Catholics.

The final basic difference that we want to discuss here is the differing views of Church and State between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Protestants believe in the separation of Church and State. By this is meant that the Church is never to be under the jurisdiction of the State, nor is the State to be under the domination of the Church. The Roman Catholic line is quite different. It holds that because Roman Catholicism is the one true religion

it must be held as the one religion of the State. Thus in countries where Roman Catholics are in the majority their religion (Church) seeks to control the State and to suppress all other churches and religions. There seeming to be no intention to change this ruthless and intolerant view in the Council, this difference again irreparably separates Biblical Protestants and Roman Catholics.

Rome may give the world the impression that she is not rigid and hard and fast but doctrinally she cannot and will not budge. Therefore, unity with Biblical Protestantism is impossible.

#### **The Prophetic Significance of the Council**

It is true that the Bible pictures one great universal Church just prior to the Lord's second Advent. If, as we have held in this article, Rome will not bend in the least in the area of doctrine, can this Council have prophetic significance? It is my opinion that it does have such significance because Rome, the World Council of Churches, and the Orthodox Church are now at least talking about union. How this union can ever possibly come about is hard to see at the present time, but it will. One thing to be remembered is that the future Universal Ecumenical Church will be an apostate Church. It will be a Church in which all the great basic doctrines of Biblical Protestantism will be denied. In fact, the true New Testament Church will have been raptured into Heaven by this time. Another thing to be remembered is that this whole great apostate religious system will be headed by a single person. The Biblical picture of this apostate Church in some of its broad outlines reminds one of the Roman Church. Could it be that

the World Council of Churches with its compromising theology and the spiritually sick Orthodox Church will one day capitulate to the Pope? It may be that the Westminster Divines were pretty near the truth when they wrote "There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be the head thereof; but is that Anti-Christ, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God" (The Westminster Confession, Article XXVI:6).

In closing, it is my firm conviction, that true Christian unity is spiritual oneness in Christ and that

it does not rely on external Church organization. I further believe that the Second Vatican Council cannot in the least part help toward effecting this spiritual oneness. The only oneness it can help to effect is the oneness of the apostate Church in the end times. Therefore we who are evangelical Christians ought to put little stock in these Councils and dialogues aimed at healing the divided Church organization. It is ours rather to preach the Gospel of Christ and to seek to win men to Him, for it is just these who are baptized into the One Body of Christ by the One Holy Spirit of God who know the oneness of God's people.

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## ANTIDOTE TO DELUSIONS

by Prof. John E. Dahlin

Religion Analysis Service Inc., of Minneapolis, Minn., is an interdenominational, non-profit agency designed to disseminate information about unscriptural cults and isms of our time. In addition to being a depot of literature, providing some of the best information available on cults the agency puts out a sixteen page quarterly, *The Discerner*.

Delusions of late have swept into all areas of Christendom like a tidal-wave, creating confusion and perplexity among many people. Paul warns about the delusions of the latter-days, and from II Thess. 2:9-12, the apostle reveals that cults will reach a climactic activity as the age comes to a close. Already six million Americans have been ensnared by these modern charlatans and quacks.

Heresy may be combatted successfully only with truth, and hence it is the primary purpose of this agency to counteract cultists by the Word of God. The care with which we select literature at our head-

quarters makes it possible to offer people the very best on the subject. And the quarterly publication, *The Discerner*, also seeks to present the scriptural truth as a definite antidote to false teachings. In other words it is necessary, we believe, to take the offensive against the cults. This is one of the major objectives of our organization. Paul writes, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4, 5).

Furthermore, Religion Analysis Service has available an effective general ammunition kit, also general exposes on cults, as well as literature designed to combat specific cults. The catalog listing all our offerings is furnished free upon re-  
(Continued on page 15)

## THE NATIONAL COUNCIL'S HONORED GUESTS

Recently we witnessed the arrival in our country of twenty or more Russian church leaders, who were here for a three-week visit. The Russian churchmen returned a visit by a delegation of thirteen American church leaders to the USSR last September. These exchange visits were authorized by the policy-making General Board of the National Council of Churches. The first such reciprocal visits between Russian and American church leaders, some may recall, took place in 1956.

At the same time this visit was being announced, there arrived a news release from the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia which states that "the persecution of religion in the USSR is getting stronger and stronger." And daily newspapers, at the time of this writing, relate the attempt of some Russian Baptists from Siberia to obtain help at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. There is no freedom of worship, they declared, where they live.

These reports are strangely contrary to the widely published descriptions (many of them coming from evangelical sources in our own country!) of the flourishing First Baptist Church of Moscow, where—to outward appearance—there is no

government interference in church proceedings.

The fact is, we believe, that all religious activity in the Soviet Union is under the control or suppression of the Communist leaders. Sworn testimony to this effect has been given by defecting Russian agents. The apparent freedom enjoyed by churches is part of the Kremlin's propaganda, designed to create a favorable impression in the minds of visitors and others who hear about it around the world. Evidence would affirm that among this group of churchmen who arrived, there is a representative of the Soviet secret police.

But the National Council leaders coolly ignore such facts and go ahead with their cozy interchanges. Such a program is to be denounced and opposed. For them to thus lend support to the avowed Communist aim of destroying our country is both unChristian and unAmerican. If individual Russians wish to visit our country, that is one thing. But to invite, fete, and extend official honors to a group of semi-conspirators is quite another. The leadership of the National Council continues to undermine Biblical truth and cherished American principles.

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### THINGS IN COMMON

*(Just recently we received the following statements as being true of ROMAN CATHOLICISM or RED COMMUNISM. Is it not true?)*

1. It deifies its leaders and denies freedom of worship.
2. It would take our Bible away from us.
3. It rules by fear, and denies freedom of conscience.
4. It has a system of brain washing.
5. It wants to, and intends to rule the world from Rome (or Moscow).
6. It hates Democracy, and denies freedom of the press.
7. It believes, "The end justifies the means."
8. It has slain multitudes in cold blood.
9. It allows no one to disagree with it.

## Listings Taken from Our Catalog

(Please add 10% as a mailing charge on orders up to \$5.)

1. *Fifty Years in The Church of Rome*, by Charles Chiniquy. A thrilling life story of Pastor Chiniquy, for 25 years a Roman Catholic priest. Vivid, irrefutable indictment of Popery. 472 pp., \$3.
2. *Romanism in the Light of Scripture*, by Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost. Is Rome a church or state? Mary the Mother of God? Mary Co-Redemptrix? Peter the first Pope? Salvation by works or faith? Purgatory? Price \$2.50.
3. *The Two Babylons*, by Alexander Hislop. 330 pp. \$3.50.
4. *Secrets of Romanism*, by Joseph Zacchello, a former priest's exposition of Roman Catholic Doctrines with clear refutation from the Douay version. 404 pp., \$2.25.
5. *The Soul of a Priest*, by L. H. Lehmann. A candid autobiography of one who was a priest, formerly. 163 pp., \$2. (cloth)
6. *How to Reach Roman Catholics for Christ*, by Dr. J. B. Rowell 96 pp., \$1.25.
7. *Bishop Strossmayer's Speech at the first Vatican Council 1870*. It is on the *Infallibility* of the Pope. 24pp., 20¢.
8. *Why I Became a Protestant*, by Luis Padrosa. He left Catholic Officialdom of Spain and became a Protestant Evangelist. 128 pp., 40¢.
9. *What Rome Teaches—Scriptural?* by Edward J. Tanis. 60 pp., 60¢.
10. *Why Millions Do Not Call the Pope "Holy Father,"* by Dr. J. R. Rowell. Eight interesting chapters. 44 pp., 50¢.
11. *Letters To A Roman Catholic Priest*, by Dr. H. A. Ironside. 48p., 30¢.
12. *The Split Between Roman Catholicism and Christ*, Lutheran press. 24 pp. 25¢.
13. *The Secret of Catholic Power*, by L. H. Lehmann. 22pp., 15¢.
14. *Why I Am Not A Roman Catholic*, by T. T. Shields, L. S. Testa and Fred J. Meldau. 10¢.
15. *Hoodwinking Protestants*, by L. H. Lehmann, Answer to The Knights of Columbus Camouflage. 10¢.
16. *To Sign Or Not To Sign the Catholic Pre-Nuptial Contract*, F. E. Meyer. 23 pp., 10¢.
17. *President or Pope? Shall Rome Dominate America*, by Dr. J. B. Rowell. 20 pp., 12¢.
18. *A Packet of Tracts on Roman Catholicism*. Price 45¢.
19. *The Watchtower Heresy Versus the Bible*, by Ted Dencher. (10 years a Witness). He gives his personal testimony, advice to a witness, and how to deal with one. 160 pp., \$2.95.

(Continued from page 13)

quest, and a sample copy of *The Discerner*, will be sent those who write for it.

On the general Board of reference of the organization are such well known leaders as Drs. C. L. Feinberg, Oswald J. Smith, Wm. R. McCarrell, John G. Mitchell, Louis

T. Talbot, and H. H. Savage, and besides these many other scholars and Bible teachers serve in this capacity. Officers of the organization are willing to appear in churches and before groups, as time permits, to acquaint people with this work, and to make available literature at nominal cost.

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## PERTINENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*By Pastor "Mac" of Spiritual Clinic (KTIS), and Pastor of  
Powderhorn Park Baptist Church, Minneapolis*

QUESTION . . . . *What is the meaning of the binding and loosing, remitting and retaining sins as given in Matthew, chapter 16:19 and chapter 18:18? To whom is this power given?*

ANSWER . . . . Catholicism believes that the authority for binding and loosing, remitting and retaining sins is given to the priest by virtue of such passages as Matthew 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23. Therefore they believe that the priest, and the priest alone, can forgive sins and give assurance of pardon; or, if the proper conditions are not met, can withhold that pardon.

What this conviction fails to take into consideration, however, is that Jesus not only gave Peter permission to bind and loose, remit and retain, but the same authority was available to His other disciples as well (note carefully Matt. 18:18 and John 20:23). These responsibilities were not reserved only for a specific group known as clergy but for ALL of the Lord's followers or disciples. Note in I Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:5, 6 that all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ make up the New Testament priesthood! For this reason, even the most inexperienced witness for Christ today can fulfill these same functions. He tells a friend the gospel story and then invites him to receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. He adds that, on the authority of the Word of God, his friend's sins will be remitted if he commits himself to Christ, or retained, if he continues to reject Christ. This declaration is made through no power of the Christian witness who utters it, but by the authority of God Himself. The witness simply conveys the challenge; God does the actual remitting or retaining. There is NOTHING here of auricular confession to the priest in the confessional with the consequent "Absolve Te" (I absolve you of your sin) uttered by one who is not God, but dares to take to himself the right to do what God alone can do (Mark 2:7). Now read Hebrews 10:11, 12.