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Why The Protestant Reformation Failed

edited

From time to time we speak of the "Protestant Reformation". This refers to a time in religious history where people were protesting the abuses of power and religious error of Roman Catholicism. Men, such as Martin Luther, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli, are examples of reformers who tried to restore the Catholic Church to a more godly place.

The failure of the reformers was in not realizing that Catholicism was not just abusing power and containing some religious error - it was in itself religious error and abuse of power. God never built or authorize the building of the Roman Catholic Church. Its organization, its worship of icons, its priest & laity distinction, its political power, its "selling of indulgences", its worship of saints & angels, and a multitude of other things manifest a spirit totally contrary to the New Testament (cp. Mt. 15:1-9; 23:1-11; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; etc.).

Regrettably, as men worked to reform the Catholic Church, they instead built their own religious errors, creeds & denominations. For example, Calvin, in rebelling against Catholicism's erroneous view of works, swung to the opposite extreme of faith only justification. The Truth is that we cannot earn salvation by our works, but God has required works of faith in connection with His granting salvation to us (Rom. 4:3, 12).

The real solution to Catholicism is the same one that will solve the rampant denominationalism of today. There is an urgent need to "come out from among them" and return to original and simple New Testament Christianity. What business do those who wish to serve God have with unrighteousness & religious error (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1)? What business do those who long to please God have with holding to man-made religion and human traditions? There is a pattern in the word of God that we should hold to (2 Tim. 1:13). Let us learn of God's way, hold to it, and by it honor God in the simplicity and purity of revealed Truth.

HOW CAN A CHRISTIAN RECEIVE FORGIVENESS FOR SINS OF IGNORANCE?

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If repentance and prayer are the conditions of pardon for the child of God who sins (Acts 8:22), what about sins of ignorance? The Bible certainly teaches that sins of ignorance may be forgiven, but nowhere does it affirm that forgiveness precedes or excludes repentance and prayer as conditions of pardon.

The sacrificial system of the Old Testament provided forgiveness of sins for sins of ignorance. Consistently, however, subsequent knowledge of these sins and repentance preceded atonement by means of sacrifice. Notice what is said:

"If the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance... when the sin...is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for sin" (Leviticus 4:13, 14, KJV).

"And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance...or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering" (Leviticus 4:27, 28, KJV).

"If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering: {16} And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him" (Leviticus 5:15-16, KJV).

"And if any one sin, and do any of the things which Jehovah hath commanded not to be done; though he knew it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity" (Leviticus 5:17, ASV).

Obviously the daily burnt offerings did not automatically cover these sins, otherwise why have to offer a sacrifice for them when they are brought to one's attention.

Frequently 1 John 1:7 is cited as evidence that God automatically cleanses the Christian from imperfections, provided his life is characterized by general fidelity. The passage reads, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." After establishing the fact of pardon in verse seven, however, John goes on to state the condition of pardon in verse nine: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is precisely the same sentiment expressed in Leviticus, except that Christ's blood makes possible full pardon, whereas the

blood of animals merely pointed the way to his supreme sacrifice.

Brethren, I am afraid our desire to excuse a Christian's shortcomings may be leading us down a dangerous track. Lately I have heard numerous persons vocalizing the opinion that if a Christian, whose general disposition is to do God's will, dies before he has a chance to pray, Jesus' blood will cover whatever sins remain unconfessed. What difference is there between saying this and saying that if an alien who fully intends to obey the gospel dies of a heart attack just before he is immersed, God will pardon him anyway. The word of God teaches us to submit to God's will and thereby acknowledge God's authority and power to forgive (Rom. 6:16-18). If our opinions are contrary to God's word, they will not change the Truth on the Judgment Day, nor will they help anyone to be stronger spiritually. Certainly we must not affirm anything that encourages weakness rather than strength, or that expresses erroneous views.

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

Othena Kinnard (Cookeville Hosp. Room 404), **Jo Miller** (Life Care Room 321), **Mag Bumbalough**, **Thelma Cunningham**, **Mary Cox**, **Monie Petty**, **Dave Poteet** (doing well), **Joshua & Misty Poteet**, **Rose Taylor**, **Dorris Williams**, **Robert & Betty England**, **Johanna Fletcher**, **Ed Williams**, **Joe Smith**, **Lydia Poe**, **Mike Tenpenny**, **Thelma Klein**, **Nathan Hill**, **DeLeesa Price** (expecting) and **Alisa**

Fletcher (expecting). Also, **Reba Jones** (Dorris Williams' niece), **Jackie Tindle** (cancer, relative of the Sims), **John Ross Key** (Mary Cox's son), **Marci Miller** (Alisa Fletcher's mother), **Ocia Bell Jones** (Doris William's mother), **Ruth Williams** (Betty England's niece), **Pauline Hickey**, **Nanny Witaker**, **Dylan Roberts** (grandson of Marilyn's friend); **Kitty Mahan** (Kathy Tenpenny's mother), **Dwayne Williams** (Dorris William's son), **Jeff England** (Robert & Betty's son), **Paul Grissom**, **Carl Williams** (Ed's brother), **Clair Gentry** (Doris' sister-in-law), **Danny & Michelle Cunningham** (Lydia Poe's brother & his wife).

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Home Bible Study** - Sat., March 3, 17, 31
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. Feb. 25.
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month.
- **GM** - Jeff Smith, April 15-20, 2007.
- **GM** - R. McPherson, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **GM** - Brian Yeager, April 13-18, 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

We know what God has brought into our lives, but what do you bring to worship? Do we bring our Bible? Do we bring humility? Do we bring selflessness & thoughtfulness? Do we bring edification & encouragement for others? Do we bring someone who needs a ride? Do we bring a friend?

2007 March				
SUNDAY-MORNING	3/4/07	3/11/07	3/18/07	3/25/07
<i>Greeter</i>	Harold Frazier	David Price	Michael Fletcher	Adam Featherston
<i>Announcements</i>	David Price	Anthony Rece	Matt Eller	Kevin Blankenship
<i>Reading</i>	Micah Eller	Ben Trute	Ben Trute	Micah Eller
	Pr 18	Pr 19	Pr 20	Pr 21
<i>Song Leader</i>	Sam Gardner	Harold Frazier	Sam Gardner	Chad Sims
<i>Opening Prayer</i>	Kevin Blankenship	Michael Fletcher	Jonathan Hickerson	Michael Fletcher
<i>Lord's Supper Lead</i>	Jonathan Hickerson	Sam Gardner	Mark Welte	Anthony Rece
<i>Lord's Supper Assist</i>	Jack Stafford	Jake Hale	Jake Hale	Jake Hale
	Chad Sims	Micah Eller	Ralph Sims	Ben Trute
	Ralph Sims	Chad Sims	Jack Stafford	Ralph Sims
<i>Closing Prayer</i>	Matt Eller	Ralph Sims	Jerry Taylor	Jerry Taylor
SUNDAY-EVENING	3/4/07	3/11/07	3/18/07	3/25/07
<i>Opening Prayer</i>	Michael Fletcher	Adam Featherston	Kevin Blankenship	Sam Gardner
<i>Song Leader</i>	Mark Welte	Kevin Blankenship	Mark Eller	
<i>Closing Prayer</i>	Mark Eller	Wesly Geer	Jack Stafford	Doug Hill
<i>Lord's Supper Lead</i>	Adam Featherston	Mark Eller	David Price	Harold Frazier
<i>Speaker / Invitation</i>		Mark Welte		Jonathan Hickerson
<i>Group</i>	1	2	3	4
WEDNESDAY-EVENING	3/7/07	3/14/07	3/21/07	3/28/07
<i>Opening Prayer</i>	Jonathan Hickerson	Doug Hill	Mark Eller	Mark Welte
<i>Song Leader</i>	Mark Welte	Harold Frazier	David Price	Sam Gardner
<i>Closing Prayer</i>	Jerry Taylor	Matt Eller	Anthony Rece	Matt Eller
<i>Invitation</i>	Doug Hill	Adam Featherston	Doug Hill	Doug Hill