

The Coming Home Network

OCTOBER 2005 NEWSLETTER

Journeys Home

THE PRESENT LOOKS VERY MUCH LIKE THE PAST

by Dennis Hankins



When I was 13, I dreamed about a letter written by my Dad in which he referred to “my son, the preacher.” I knew that I was that son. My pastor, Brother Jesse, always called me his little preacher boy. So after my dream, I felt called by God to preach and minister to his people. Brother Jesse had never asked me to preach or do anything like that. But I began to think that if he ever asked me—“When are you going to preach for me?”—I would answer him: “When you ask me.” And then it happened!

One Sunday morning as my family and I were walking into church, Brother Jesse greeted us. Then he turned to me and said, “How’s my little preacher boy? When are you going to preach for me?”

I thought, “This is it!” I stood as tall as a 13-year old can stand and said with confidence, “When you ask me.”

Startled, Brother Jesse looked at daddy and asked, “Is he called?”

And daddy said, “He says he is.”

Well, Brother Jesse was never one to “quench the Spirit,” so that Sunday morning he announced that Brother Dennis had been called to preach and would preach his first sermon the next Sunday morning.

That next week found me frantically studying for my first sermon. Feelings of inadequacy and destiny haunted me. Being an avid Bible reader, I searched the Scriptures for

a text. I thought the Psalms would be a rich source, so I looked there. It would have been considerably easier locating a text had our church been using the Lectionary, but I don’t think we knew one existed. I did have, however, the Marked Reference Bible KJV with Concordance and Chain of Reference System that my Daddy and Mommy, with all their love and blessings, gave to me on the occasion of my baptism in August 1967.

Psalm 127:1, the eighth song of ascents, caught my eye. It reads: “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the

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watchman waketh but in vain.” So, at the ripe old age of 13, I brought my first sermon to a Sunday morning congregation of our Pentecostal church.

Standing at the same pulpit from which my great-grandfather had preached, I declared, “Only God is the true and sure foundation; only the Lord can be our sure protection.” I went on explaining the text with the accumulated wisdom of 13 years, stating that man is weak but God is strong. In addition, I said, nothing is truly sure, real, or durable, unless the Lord builds it and guards it.

A rather prophetic text in light of the understanding and conviction I would one day come to embrace concerning the historic Catholic faith, which many years later I would come to understand as the faith that St. Jude states was “once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Indeed I would discover that it is the faith that has been embraced by believers of all times and in all places, and is the faith of which the Church is the “pillar and bulwark” (1 Tim. 3:15); the faith the Church guards, defends, and teaches. I would come to realize that the “house” of Psalm 127:1 is the Church that Jesus said He would build, and that house of the living faith is the Catholic Church.

Full Gospel Tabernacle in Huntingburg, IN, was not only where I preached my first sermon but also where I first learned about Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the richness of the Holy Scriptures. It was there in the Pentecostal church founded by my great-grandfather, Rev. Samuel Seibert, that I was born again at the age of nine.

Our church taught that it was necessary to be born again, to have a personal encounter and relationship with Jesus. In the Gospel of John chapter 3, Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again” (vs. 3). So anyone coming under “conviction” for their sins and estrangement from God were invited to come to the altar, repent, and “pray through” to salvation.

One hot summer Friday evening, at the age of nine, with my Bible in hand I walked the 7 1/2 blocks to attend the youth service at my church. Concerned that someone might see me carrying my Bible, I tried to hide it behind

my back. At church, I took my place on the hard wooden-slat pew where I sat alone. The air was hot and sticky. Inside I felt alone, almost desperate, and began to cry. By the age of nine I already had stolen candy and begun to use the word “heck.” Maybe I wasn’t a hardened sinner, but I could not restrain the tears and didn’t know what to do. Here I was alone in church, without a living faith in God, convinced that I would be doing time in hell.

Brother Snodgrass and his wife Darlene were the youth leaders at our church. He asked me if I would like to sing a special song. How could I sing at time like this? My life was passing before me. With my head bowed, I shook my head “no.” Brother Snodgrass was standing on the platform, leaning toward me as if he wanted to see me better, but I couldn’t look him in the eye. By this time, everyone in the congregation was looking at me.

Sensing my struggle, he gently asked whether I wanted to pray. “I guess so,” I said. Coming down from the platform,

he put his arm around me and encouraged me to walk those few steps to the altar—the same altar where hundreds before me had knelt and found peace with God. There I also knelt and prayed. Stored up feelings of resistance to God’s love erupted in tears of repentance and acceptance of the free offer of Grace. Now no longer a stranger or alien, I felt received as angels and archangels and all

the company of heaven welcomed me into the family of God.

Most moments of divine visitation at our church concluded with joyful singing. This moment was no different as we sang, as only Pentecostals can, “I’m so glad that Jesus set me free; I’m so glad that Jesus set me free; I’m so glad that Jesus set me free, singing glory, hallelujah, Jesus set me free!”

On August 27, 1967, on a very warm and sunny Sunday afternoon, we gathered on the bank of the muddy Patoka River where several of us were to be baptized. At this same location, in the early 1920’s, my great-grandfather had also conducted baptisms. Although we did not hold a sacramental view of baptism, I nevertheless knew,

“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Ps. 127:1)...Indeed I would discover that it is the faith that has been embraced by believers of all times and in all places, and is the faith of which the Church is the “pillar and bulwark;” the faith the Church guards, defends, and teaches. I would come to realize that the house of Psalm 127:1 is the Church that Jesus said He would build...

standing there looking at the water, that this was important. The Scriptures about being buried and raised with Christ through baptism were read, and “Shall We Gather at the River” was sung. Then one by one we walked into the muddy water to Brother Jesse, who with the elders immersed me into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, saying, “Brother Dennis Hankins, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” It was about 2 o’clock in the afternoon. I felt compelled to record the event in my Bible.

We also had communion. Again, we did not hold a sacramental view of this practice of the church either, but we approached it with reverence and respect. I was deeply touched by how we partook of the Lord’s Supper. A wooden kitchen table was set up in the front of the church with corresponding wooden chairs. Groups of six would sit at this table and re-enact the reception of the bread and the juice. After all had eaten and drunk the elements, the men would wash each other’s feet while the women followed suit. Why? Because Jesus washed his disciples’ feet at the Last Supper and then instructed his disciples to go and do likewise. The washing of feet demonstrated for us that we should love one another, as Christ has loved us. I remember feeling vulnerable, embarrassed, and awkward doing this that first time at my childhood church. As I struggled to embrace this rite, I remember thinking how could I claim to love my brother if I couldn’t accept him and serve him even in the washing of his feet?

I didn’t know it at the time, but everything I had experienced up to that point foreshadowed the historic faith as I would come to know it. Conversion, baptism, the power of the Holy Spirit, communion, even a hint of Holy Orders in my own call to the ministry — each of these shows a resemblance to what has always been believed in the historic Church, and it was this resemblance that created the need in me to know the fullness of the truth. At this point, however, a confession is in order.

As a Pentecostal, I rejected liturgical worship. Since the rites and ceremonies usually associated with liturgical worship were foreign to me, I concluded they were foreign

to God also. Like so many Protestants, I had no clue as to the meanings behind the rich, sacramental actions of the Church; but the failure to understand something is not reason enough to deny it. The Lord, however, has always been patient and especially merciful in permitting me to discover the ancient treasures of His holy Church. These treasures may be old, but they are also always new. They are timeless and without the blemish of age. And in the historic Catholic understanding of the faith, I discovered the reasons behind the practices of my Pentecostal church. So I have not lost anything; I’ve only gained.

The modern emphasis on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit has been an enriching blessing to the Body of Christ. Indeed, the Pentecostal church in which I grew up believed and preached that God wanted us to be full of the Holy Spirit. We cherished the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. We believed that what Acts chapter 2 described as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the nascent church should be our experience today. My life and growth in the Spirit can be summed up in the words of the Nicene Creed: “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and Son is worshipped and Glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.”

Back to the Future

It is always amazing how the present looks so much like the past. All kinds of

roads, relationships, and experiences are instruments the Lord uses to shape and guide us. Having grown up in Huntingburg, IN, in Dubois County, I was more than aware of the Catholic Church. I’ve often said there are more Catholics in Dubois County than there are people. Such is the witness and presence of Christ’s Church. Bishop Gettlefinger of the Evansville Diocese is from Dubois County. Archbishop Buechlein of Indianapolis is from Dubois County. Dr. Mark Ginter, my dear friend and a Professor of Moral Theology at St. Meinrad Seminary, also lives in Dubois County and has had a gentle impact on my search for the historic Catholic faith.

When our 3 oldest children were younger, my wife would help them learn Christmas music on their instruments and then schedule a Christmas Concert for the Sisters at St.

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Mary Church just a block from our house in Huntingburg. With my wife, Debbie, assisting on the piano, the children would perform their pieces on guitar, saxophone, flute, and violin. The Sisters would make cookies and punch to show their appreciation. They always befriended us with their gentle spirit and witness.

On three occasions, Debbie was asked to assist in an ecumenical choir performance that was under the direction of a Catholic parish choir director. These concerts took place at local Catholic and Protestant parishes and as far away as the Passionist nuns' community in Owensboro, KY. Several of Debbie's piano students were sons and daughters of local Catholic families.

Many generous and good friends, many of whom were faithful members of a Catholic parish, supported my local 60-second radio commentary on WITZ 990 AM, called *Front Page with Dennis Hankins*. They supported me because they appreciated my pro-life emphasis. I could never shake the reality that it was mostly Catholics who were on the forefront of the pro-life witness.

Debbie and I had had a tubal ligation, which was preventing us from having more children. When we became convinced that this action was wrong, it was a faithful and dear Catholic friend who gave us helpful and fruitful direction. Through the assistance of One More Soul, we found a surgeon in Jackson, TN, who was experienced in the procedure to reverse tubal ligations. The surgery was successful, and Heidi, our fourth child, is now 4 years old.

Then there was the faithful and inspiring witness of Pope John Paul II. I will never forget how he went to the prison to forgive his would-be assassin. That image of Christ's love still touches me deeply. I have read many of John Paul II's encyclicals, and they always give me the feeling that I'm reading the words of a man who walks close to the Cross. He led the Church in repentance, renewal, and restoration—all of which resonate with my spirit. I

came to see him as not just a nice person, or even just a righteous person, but as an example and prophet to the world. By word and deed his witness to the truth caused me to ponder more and more the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church.

This desire to understand the faith accelerated in May 1997 when I preached a series of sermons comparing what we believed with what Catholics believe. I was concerned about whether we held the same truths, and if we didn't, whether it mattered. As a Protestant minister, I was interested in history, but as I delved into the past, I became aware that the Church was not merely 500 years old but closer to 2000 years old. This led to a hunger for more information about the ancient Church, which eventually resulted in my ordination to the priesthood in the Charismatic Episcopal Church on October 30, 1997. Nevertheless, the hunger for truth continues and always will. My heart's desire is to be a part of the "unity of the faith" in all its authority, worship, and devotion as it is in the Catholic Church.

It is not fair, however, to conclude this section without giving witness to my parents. Although it was common to hear disparaging remarks about the Catholic Church in the Pentecostal world, my mom and dad never taught me hateful or hurtful anti-Catholic attitudes. About the time I was getting out on my own in 1974, they moved from Indiana to Arkansas, where daddy accepted an appointment to serve in the pastorate of the United Methodist Church. This

was a big leap from the Pentecostal world to a mainline denomination like the UMC. The witness of my parents to walk through doors that they discerned God had opened for them continues to inspire me to go wherever He is leading. Part of this leading also resulted in my serving UMC student pastorates while going to college. It was in the UMC that a sense of liturgy and order began to seep into me. The fact that the UMC has Anglican roots further enriched my understanding of the worship of God. I had no idea that this would be another link in the chain of

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Dr. Kenneth Howell
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HOME

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Curtis Martin
revert from nondenominationalism

November 14
Tatjana Cameron
Convert from secularism

November 21
Irish Pre-tape
from our recent trip to Ireland

November 28
Dr. H. Graham Hudgins
former Episcopal priest

You can also listen on the Internet at:
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Featured Resource



***Marcus Grodi's novel** about a Protestant minister's search for the truth, but with a **new cover design** (for those who found the previous cover a bit too graphic). Marcus wrote this novel to explain to his father why he and his family left the Protestant ministry to become Roman Catholics. A great book to give away to family and friends for the same purpose!*

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In our last newsletter, we recommended and featured the book *Martin Luther: The Christian Between God and Death* by Richard Marius. Under the stress of getting the newsletter into print, we relied upon the recommendations of two good and faithful Lutheran converts who had found this book an unbiased, fair appraisal of Luther's character and motives, and especially a helpful look into key aspects of Luther's personality that other biographers generally miss. Then last weekend I was able to start reading the book for myself. While the author does provide these important insights, I'm not comfortable with many of his attitudes towards Scripture, Tradition, and Church history. This book may be helpful for clergy and academics who are well aware of the opinions of critical scholarship, but the author's opinions—and sometimes language—may be offensive to some readers. Therefore, we apologize for this mix-up. If any of you who ordered this book would like to return it, please contact us for a complete refund including all shipping charges. We promise to be more careful in the future. In the meantime, please be aware that our recommendation or sale of a book does not necessarily imply our endorsement of every statement in it.

Sincerely in Christ,
Marcus Grodi



Please pray for...

⊕ Clergy ⊕

✠ For Don in Maine who, after 20 years of Protestant ministry, is ready to come Home.

✠ For Rebecca, a Presbyterian seminarian, who is beginning the process to become Catholic.

✠ That the Holy Spirit will
guide Dean, a Lutheran minister,
who is seeking the fullness of the
Truth.

✠ That our Lord will guide Robert, a Reformed Episcopal priest, who is in full agreement with the Church in faith and morals but cannot, at this time, abandon his ministry.

✠ For Brian, a Lutheran minister, seeking the fullness of God's will for his life.

✠ For Timothy, who after reading John Henry Cardinal Newman now feels led toward what he formerly opposed.

✠ For Doug, who has been a Baptist minister for 38 years and has become convinced the Catholic Church is the true Church. His wife does not share his convictions.

✠ For Drew, a Baptist minister who wants to convert but is concerned that this might jeopardize his desire to serve Christ in ministry.

⊕ Laity ⊕

✠ For Greg and the intentions of
his family.

In every issue we include timely prayer concerns from the membership. Each person mentioned has contacted us and is somewhere along their journey home. All members are encouraged to pray at least one hour each month before the Blessed Sacrament for the needs in general and specific of the *CHNetwork*, its members and supporters.

Please submit all prayer requests and answers to :

CHN Prayer List
P. O. Box 8290
Zanesville, OH 43702

You may also email your prayer requests to:

prayers@chnnetwork.org

We will use only first names to preserve anonymity.

✠ For James and his
understanding of Catholic truth.

✠ For Terry and Julie in their understanding of God's will.

✠ For Susan and her struggle with living certain aspects of the Catholic life.

✠ For Carolyn, in health, peace,
and understanding His call.

✠ For Donna to witness our
Christian faith and morals
to those in her family.

✠ For Jason and his struggles with his family as he converts.

✠ For the personal intentions of
all our helpers, our contacts, and
their families

✠ For a welcome home to the
Goulet family, and those who
came back to the Church.

✠ Quo Vadis Youth ✠

✠ For Nicole, who is coming into the Church with her father, a Presbyterian minister

✠ For Erin, a Mormon, who is
on the journey.

✠ For Josh, who desires to convert but is dealing with family pressures.

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events that was leading me to the fullness of the faith in the Catholic Church.

I Will Build My Church

I have thousands of hours of study, reading, prayer, and pastoring under my belt. My experience in pastoring Pentecostal, Methodist, and now CEC churches has caused me to yearn even more for the “unity of the faith.” The present sons and daughters of the Reformation continue to split, divide, and multiply as though Jesus had said He would build churches, plural. Of course, we all know Jesus said, “I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:18).

There is only one Church, and the Founder of it gave only one set of keys. Those keys and the authority they symbolize were given to Peter. We can ignore that truth and go on our way, but to ignore it is to ignore the basic

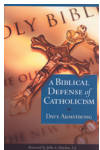
foundation to the unity of the Church. Many believers are not so much anti-Catholic as they are completely unaware of where their own faith tradition came from. Where else is there preserved what the Church has always believed and preached than in the Church that has always been and always will be?

It is out of well-honed conviction that I write these things. I do not take lightly my ordination or the vows that I took; nor do I take lightly the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17, or His teaching about His body and blood, given for the life of the world, as described in John 6, or His words “upon this rock I will build My Church.” It is to this Church, the mother of us all, that I humbly submit.

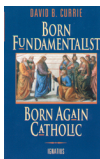
Dennis was an ordained minister in the Charismatic Episcopal Church. He, his wife Deborah, and their family are presently in RCIA with anxious anticipation of being received into the Church, Easter 2006.

Resources for the Journey

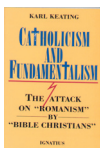
Do you have questions about the teachings of the Catholic Church but don't know where to begin? The following are some book suggestions we hope will help you on your journey of faith.



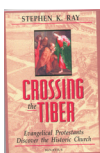
A Biblical Defense of Catholicism. Dave Armstrong. (Manchester: Sophia Institute Press, 2003) Dave Armstrong focuses on those issues about which Catholics and Protestants disagree the most: the role of the Bible as a rule of faith, whether we are justified by faith alone, whether doctrine develops, what the Eucharist really is, veneration of Mary and prayer to the saints, the existence of Purgatory, the role of penance in salvation, and the nature and infallibility of the papacy.



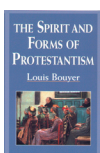
Catholicism and Fundamentalism, Karl Keating. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988). This book, which very effectively refutes the common fundamentalist misconceptions of and attacks on the Catholic Church, has served as the initial stepping stone for many modern converts.



Born Fundamentalist Born Again Catholic, David Currie. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996) A book written as an explanation to family and friends about why David became a Roman Catholic. Currie presents a very lucid, systematic and intelligible account of the reasons for his conversion to the ancient Church that Christ founded. He gives a detailed discussion of the important theological and doctrinal beliefs that Catholics and Evangelicals hold in common, as well as key doctrines that separate us, particularly the Eucharist, the Pope, and Mary.



Crossing the Tiber, Stephen K. Ray (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997) A moving account of the conversion of an evangelical, thoroughly documented with over 400 biblical and patristic quotations and commentary.



The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism, Louis Bouyer. (Princeton: Scepter Publishers, 2001) A Lutheran convert to Catholicism and leading authority on liturgical and devotional theology, Bouyer makes a powerful case for the chief principles of the Reformation - sola gratia, sola fide and sola scriptura - and then argues why the Reformation “spirit” cannot be sustained. This book remains among the most incisive looks into the main difference between Catholicism and Protestantism.

The Church and Bible Interpretation: Who Has the Final Word on the Word

by Gregory Oatis

THE CHALLENGE: The Bible is God's unerring word. He intends for believers to read and interpret the Bible on their own, to the best of their abilities, without an external agenda being "forced" upon them. For that reason, the prerequisites of salvation are set out clearly in the pages of Scripture. Using our own God-given faculties, in keeping with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we receive from the pages of "Scripture alone" everything we need to be saved.

Our response: The Catholic Church treats Scripture the way Jesus treated Scripture. The Church knows that some of the truths of the Bible are difficult to discern and understand. In the wisdom of the Spirit and out of the recesses of her collective memory—which extends back to the time of the apostles—she reveals the hidden depths of the Scriptures.

Jesus did the same thing for His followers, who had actually seen the Scriptures fulfilled in the Person of Christ Himself without even beginning to grasp what they themselves had witnessed: "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them what referred to Him in all the Scriptures" (Lk. 24:27).

Apparently "Scripture alone" was not sufficient for Jesus' own followers to understand even the truth their eyes had seen. They needed to have it spelled out for them.

The belief in private judgment—enunciated in the challenge above—states that each individual believer has the ability and the authority to interpret the Bible on his or her own.

This position is the inevitable conclusion of the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura*. After all, if the Bible is the supreme authority of the faith, the Church no longer has the authority to interpret it. Who is left? Only the individual.

In fact, the Church has always upheld the right of private judgment—up to a point. We are obliged as individuals to interpret the Bible for the simple reason that the Church has not clarified every single biblical point. Far from it.

In addition, the Church cannot always enlighten us on the application of biblical truths to our own unique life circumstances.

Thus, we are encouraged to read the Bible on our own, reverently, in light of both the truth of Sacred Tradition

and the teachings of the Church.

Some claim that, of course, our private interpretations do not supercede those of the Church, whose teaching authority was granted by Christ Himself for our benefit. Thus, I cannot dispute the Church's position on a given issue simply because "that's not how I read it in the Bible."

Nor do the pages of Scripture assure us that every individual who picks up a Bible can expect to be guided infallibly by the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Bible tells us that private interpretation can in some cases be dangerous.

"Know this first of all, that there is no prophecy of Scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation," St. Peter warns (2 Pet. 1:20). For, he adds, Scripture contains "some things hard to understand that the ignorant and unstable distort to their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16).

St. Paul, the great teacher of the Gentiles, also holds that the truths of our faith are not immediately and correctly grasped by all: "We speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, and which none of the rulers of this age knew" (1 Cor. 2:7-8).

St. Augustine agrees. In his work *On Christian Doctrine* he tells us that if our individual interpretation of the Word differs from that of the Church, either our understanding of the passage is incomplete—as happens when an unfamiliar idiom occurs—or else the translation we are using is flawed. Nowhere does he state that our own interpretation should lead us to conclude that the Church's teachings are faulty.

Finally, it's worth noting that nowhere in the Bible do we see any believer coming to faith through a personal interpretation of "Scripture alone." There is always a trustworthy teacher, one ordained for the community by the authority of God, on hand to guide and teach. How fortunate we are as Catholics to be able to rely on that same Spirit-breathed authority, which resides even today in the Church.

Mr. Oatis is author of the book Catholic Doctrine in Scripture: A Guide to the Verses That Are Key to Affirming the Faith, published by CHResources. It is available at your local Catholic bookseller, or by calling toll-free 877-455-3208.

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Stand Firm and Hold to the Traditions

by Marcus Grodi

As a Protestant pastor, I was committed to presenting the truth of Jesus Christ and His Gospel. I took this task seriously. I built my teaching and preaching upon the foundation of Scripture alone and believed that what I was feeding my congregation was safely palatable. As I look back, I am amazed at how blind I was. There are so many Scripture texts I either unconsciously missed, conveniently avoided, or consciously explained away.

Some of these, such as Matthew 16:18-19, John 6:51-69, 20:23, 1 Timothy 3:15, and others are obvious to me now, since I've become more apologetically informed. However, one text that has become very significant to me is 2 Thessalonians 2:15:

So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.

To Paul and the Christians to whom he wrote, the touchstone for theological, doctrinal, and ecclesial truth was the words and teachings being passed, preserved, and revered, orally and sometimes by hand. Similar texts, such as 1 Corinthians 11:2, actually indicate that the readers were to accept the written testimonies BECAUSE they were in agreement with the oral testimonies—the oral traditions were the authoritative template.

Most modern biblical scholarship has thrown out not only the trustworthiness of early traditions but also the validity of any original “deposit of faith.” This of course is the predictable trajectory of the Protestant emphasis on Scripture alone as the only trustworthy testimony of early Christianity.

However, what makes me pause is that Paul and the other New Testament writers were moved to write almost entirely because they needed to address specific imminent problems which they could not correct in person. This has several very important implications:

(1) There were probably many problems the New

Testament authors took care of personally which they never wrote about.

(2) There were also many things that were going well which they never mentioned.

(3) If they COULD have handled all the problems in person, we may have had a very short New Testament!

When we Protestants limited ourselves to only the testimony of the written word, we made ourselves naively susceptible to the problems and stubbornly resistant to the solutions that in fact ecclesial tradition alone has preserved and addressed.

The reality is that *sola Scriptura* exists nowhere in any Protestant denomination. In every case, we encounter new traditions erected to fill the void left by the rejection of Sacred Tradition. And when the validity of an authoritative deposit of faith is rejected, the basis for establishing any authority, even in Scripture, is short-circuited, leaving us where modern scholarship has left us: slaves to individual or scholarly opinion.

I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you.

1 Corinthians 11:2

I have come to accept joyfully the reality that the tradition Paul so often commanded the early Christians to hold fast to was the inspired truth Jesus had promised the Church would receive through the guiding, protecting presence of the Holy Spirit (John 14-15). I believe a portion of this tradition became recorded in the written Word, but most remained present in the oral Tradition. This has remained one of the primary reasons for the existence of the Church throughout the ages: the protection and preservation of this Truth.

May we remain faithful to Paul's command and actively do our part to “stand firm and hold to the traditions.” And may we also protect and defend the institution Christ established as the steward of these truths.

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