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Understanding & Reaching Our Catholic Friends

— Les Lofquist —

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Minnesota town in which I grew up has a strong Roman Catholic culture. I grew up with the grandchildren of German and Polish immigrants and they seemed to be serious about their church. They had compelling reasons to be. Our town had a four-year Catholic women's college and a four-year Catholic men's college. There is a seminary to train Roman Catholic priests. There are five private Catholic schools in my hometown's parochial educational system. All this in a town of 25,000 people.

My best friend was Catholic. Many of my teachers, classmates, sports team-mates and fishing buddies were Catholics. The girls I dated and the neighbors all around me were also Catholics.

However, I did not grow up attending church, so all of this religious activity in my hometown did not affect me. But it was a bit puzzling.

The Minnesota town in which I grew up has a strong Roman Catholic culture.

Back in those years my impression was that the Roman Catholic Church is a much more serious religion than the churches of my Protestant friends. I thought, "*The Catholics have nuns and priests and the Pope. They have their own schools. They have daily Mass. They have a lot of rules and regulations and holy days. They're REALLY serious about God and Jesus!*"

But I also saw the disconnect between how many of my Catholic friends lived and what their church

and their families taught. So we got along well, just as long as we didn't talk about religion. And since I didn't care much for any church, this arrangement suited me just fine.

I had no problems getting along with my Catholic friends... until after I got out of High School. It began when I met four girls whose new-found faith challenged everything I believed. I resisted their repeated messages. They gave me a Bible. I refused to read the Bible for myself. But after months of resistance, I finally read that book and it changed my life. I realized I was a sinner who needed a Savior and I was crushed by conviction over my sin and pride. I humbly placed my faith in Christ alone to save me.

With great joy, I tried to explain to my Catholic friends my new-found faith in Jesus Christ, but things grew tense. I didn't really understand why, I just knew that now I "was talking about religion" and that was problematic in my hometown. When we did talk, I enthusiastically and with deep

conviction talked about the Bible and my sin and my need for a Savior and my relationship with Christ. But my Catholic friends didn't seem to share my enthusiasm.

It became imperative that I understand my Catholic friends and their church's teachings so that I could intelligently explain my faith from the Bible.

It became imperative that I understand my Catholic friends and their church's teachings so that I could intelligently explain my faith from the Bible. Thus began my first earnest theological study.

I had to sort out all of the similarities I now shared with the Catholics from the differences we had in theology. Catholics

believe in the Trinity and that Jesus is both God and man. They believe in Christ's literal and physical resurrection from the dead. They believe Christ is coming again. They believe in the literalness of Satan and demons and the evil of sin, and they believe in a literal and eternal heaven and hell.

So, why were my Catholic friends unhappy with my expression of faith in Christ as Savior? What were our differences?

I became even more confused when my Catholic friends explained that they believed in salvation by grace. I thought: *"That's exactly what I believe too!"* So, what exactly was the difference? I was baffled.

THE MAIN DIFFERENCE

Especially baffling was the part about grace. I sensed that this was the main difference, but my Catholic friends were saying the same thing about grace as I was. This puzzled me because we ultimately ended up at a different understanding of how to get to heaven. I said it was through faith in Christ alone. They said it involved the Church in some way.

As I studied the official Roman Catholic theology of the Sacraments,

I came to understand that to a Catholic the Sacraments were the means of receiving God's grace. The Sacraments are the way that forgiveness of sins is conveyed. These Sacraments are as follows:

- Baptism
- Penance
- Eucharist (the Mass)
- Confirmation
- Holy Orders
- Matrimony
- Anointing of the sick / last rites

The seven Sacraments, only when administered by the Roman Catholic Church, "contain" God's grace.¹ They are not merely symbolic but they are the actual channel of grace, the "instrumental cause" of God's grace.² Official Roman Catholic theology teaches that the Catholic receives more and more grace as he or she participates more and more in the Sacraments, "by the very fact of the action's being performed."³ The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the Sacraments are the necessary way to heaven for salvation.⁴

This is the main difference. The Bible teaches that the grace of God is His favor which is unmerited and cannot be earned (Ephesians 2:8-9). It is not by the righteous works we do inside the church or outside the church that we earn God's favor and gradually become good enough to earn heaven (Titus 3:4-7). We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ's redeeming work on the Cross alone. Nothing else. We cannot earn our way to heaven by the Sacraments.

HISTORIC CATHOLIC TEACHING

In my study, I learned more about the historic Catholic understanding of grace and justification and salvation. A number of Roman Catholic cardinals met at the Council of Trent, held from 1545-1563. They met to discuss the Reformers' objections to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, specifically as it related to the doctrine of justification. The Reformers distinguished between the justification of a sinner by faith in Christ alone and the post-salva-

LES LOFQUIST'S ITINERARY

MAY

- 9-10 Calvary Bible College Board Meeting
Graduation, Kansas City, MO
- 18 a.m. Helvetia Community Church, Hillsboro, OR
p.m. Word of Grace Bible Church, Battleground, WA
- 19 Pre-Convention Meeting at Eugene Hilton, Eugene, OR
- 31 Wedding of Paul Lofquist/Summer Miles, St. George, UT

JUNE

- 17-19 IFCA Board Meetings, Eugene, OR
- 20-24 IFCA Annual Convention, Eugene, OR
- 24-25 IFCA Youth Convention, Portland, OR

tion inward work of the Holy Spirit called sanctification. Rome combined the two concepts into one. They taught that God justifies us through a life-long process as we grow, by the power of God's Spirit, in sanctifying grace.

The Reformers claimed that Rome rejected the clear teaching of passages such as Romans 4:1-5. After thorough discussion and investigation, the Council of Trent issued this decree: "*Canon 9*. If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone (*supra* chapters 7-8), meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema [i.e. accursed]." This curse upon the Reformers' view by the Council of Trent made the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church about salvation clear to me: they teach that salvation comes through the Sacraments and our working to earn God's grace.

QUESTIONING THIS ASSESSMENT

Not everyone would agree with my assessment. In the years since I came to Christ, some rather high profile Protestant evangelicals have returned to the Roman Catholic Church. They perceive that evangelicalism is incomplete, lacks a confessional theology maintained by a historic church leader, and is shallow in liturgy and aesthetics. Those evangelicals who have returned to Rome are aggressively urging many others to join them.

In March, 1994 a significant group of leading evangelical and Roman Catholic theologians, writers, and teachers signed a major document of agreement called *Evangelicals & Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium*. Among many issues addressed by this document, the most troubling for me is the impression that the Reformation truths fought over and defended for 500 years are today resolved. Therefore, this document calls for a moratorium on efforts to

evangelize Roman Catholics because evangelicals and Catholics are "brothers and sisters in Christ."

Certainly there are genuinely regenerated, born again believers attending Roman Catholic Churches. I know some personally. But true believers cannot be in full agreement with official Catholic theology regarding salvation by grace through the Sacraments. I also acknowledge that merely attending a Catholic church doesn't describe what that particular individual believes.

In recent years there has been a resurgence among evangelicals of a contemplative approach to spirituality. This practice draws almost entirely upon the teachings of Catholic mystics. The ecumenical ties between evangelical ministries and Catholic leaders have grown over the last three decades. On non-doctrinal issues, Catholics and evangelicals have been standing together as co-belligerents against the encroaching darkness of our culture's breakdown.

All of these things have filtered their way into the popular mindset of evangelicalism. Today, many evangelicals I meet and talk to are questioning the need to evangelize Roman Catholics.

SUMMARY & COMPARISON

To summarize, the Catholics believe that salvation looks like this:

Faith + Works = Justification (you do good works along with your faith in order to earn justification).

- I must have faith in God in order to be saved.
- I must add good works to my faith in order to be saved.
- I must participate in the Sacraments to be saved.
- Baptism cleanses me of Original Sin. The other Sacraments earn my forgiveness.
- I cannot be confident of my salvation. My eternal destiny depends on the state of my soul when I die.

To summarize, the Bible teaches that salvation looks like this:

Faith = Justification + Works (you must exercise faith, which results in justification and good works).

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- I am saved by faith alone in Christ alone (*John 3:16, 36; John 5:24; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10*).
- I must not trust in my own good works to save me (*Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-5; Romans 3:20-22,28; Romans 4:5*).
- I will do good works if I am truly saved (*Romans 6:1-2; James 2:24*).
- I can have assurance of my salvation (*John 10:27-29; 1 John 5:13*).

APPLYING THESE TRUTHS

Understanding these truths has helped me whenever I have spoken to a Catholic about spiritual things. I understand the need to evangelize. I know that all of us are in need of salvation from our sins and hell. I never assume anyone, Protestant or Catholic, is saved just because he or she goes to church. I always seek to explain what the Bible says about our eternal destinies. I keep the conversation centered on sin and God's remedy at the Cross.

Because of my upbringing, I like "to talk religion" with my Catholic friends. And I have lots of opportunities because almost 25% of our nation's population claims to be Roman Catholic.

I am comfortable around Catholics, even when discussing these potentially divisive spiritual things. But we need to understand the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church in order to reach our Catholic friends with the truth of the gospel. And may God help us in this most important venture!

RESOURCES

For more help regarding sharing the Gospel with Roman Catholics, contact IFCA International members Larry Miller or Frank Eberhardt (see their articles and contact information elsewhere in this issue) or Lyle Murphy (Grace Bible Mission, lmurphy13@kc.rr.com).

For more help understanding Catholic theology, consult *The Gospel According to Rome*, James G. McCarthy (Harvest House, 1995) and follow its indexed references to *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City, Rome: Urbi et Orbi Communications, 1994). This second book is an absolutely essential reference work to own because it is the first official Catholic catechism in over 400 years and it bears the imprimatur of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, who is now Pope Benedict XVI.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Council of Trent, session 7, "Canons on the Sacraments in General," canon 6.
- 2 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Vatican City, Rome: Urbi et Orbi Communications, 1994, Paragraph 1084. This is an important book which bears the imprimatur of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, who is now Pope Benedict XVI.
- 3 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Paragraph 1128. Also see Paragraphs 1127 and 1131.
- 4 Council of Trent, session 7, "Canons on the Sacraments in General," canon 4. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Paragraph 1129.

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How the Lord Jesus Christ Saved Me

— Joe O'Neill —



When God does a mighty work to change our lives, the normal reaction is to tell others about it. In fact the Bible says, “Let the redeemed of the LORD say so” (Psalm 107:2). In this article, I want to tell you what the Lord has done for me.

My story begins in Jackson, Michigan, where I was born the fifth of six children. We were a normal, middle-class, Roman Catholic family. My parents sent us to a parochial school through the eighth grade, which was not only a solid education, but also a positive experience.

I grew up believing deeply in God. I knew that God was good and I knew He wanted me to be a nice person and treat others right. I was convinced from a young age that the best life is to honor Him. Our family went to church every Sunday and gave thanks to God at meals. But that doesn't mean we were without problems. Remember, we were a normal family, and normal families have problems. My own heart was anxious and my

spirit restless as I tried to find my place in this world.

In Junior High I started to consider the idea of becoming a Catholic priest. My favorite uncle was a priest. He was talented, good with people, friendly, could sing, enjoyed sports, and was fun to spend time with. I began thinking that perhaps God wanted me to become a priest when I grew up.

We were a normal, middle-class, Roman Catholic family. I grew up believing deeply in God. I knew that God was good and I knew He wanted me to be a nice person.

In addition to attending regular church services I began attending a Charismatic Catholic service on Sunday nights. I certainly enjoyed the upbeat singing and guitar accompaniment, the testimonies, the people, and the more informal atmosphere. The

people who attended the service really seemed to want to be there.

One night at the Charismatic service, a leader gave a bold invitation. He said that if anyone in the audience wanted to put their faith in Christ, they should come to the middle of the auditorium (where the leaders were). I was thinking about it, but was hesitant, wondering what others might think if I went forward. Then I saw a nun leave her seat and start for the middle. I thought to myself, “If a nun needs to put her faith in Christ, then I certainly need to as well!”

I went forward and one of the leaders guided me in a prayer to receive Christ. I repeated all the words. I meant it with all my heart. But, I didn't experience true conversion by the power of the Holy Spirit. Looking back now (some thirty-three years later), I understand that I didn't truly put my faith in Jesus Christ alone to save me at that meeting. I was just performing another religious task in order to be right with God. At that time my real faith was in my ability to please God by doing good works. I thought that if I did enough good things, God would see my heart and be pleased.

I was involved with Fellowship of Christian Athletes at the public High School. One of the Math teachers started the group and would talk to us about

faith in Christ and the importance of reading the Bible. The emphasis on Scripture was certainly helpful.

After graduating from High School, I went to Canisius College in Buffalo, New York, a college associated with the Society of Jesus (or Jesuits). I majored in Religious Studies with the idea of perhaps pursuing the priesthood. I enjoyed learning about the Bible, non-Christian religions and philosophy. But my, how confusing it all was. Some of the professors didn't really believe the Bible. One in particular, a Jesuit priest, said he didn't believe that Jesus Christ rose bodily from the grave. The priest told the class that Jesus didn't physically come back from the dead, but arose only in the hearts of His followers. I was shocked when I heard that because the resurrection of Christ was what I had always been taught. But, I stayed in school because I figured the priest was much more intelligent than I was.

The more I learned from the professors and the books during college, the less I believed the Bible and the more confused I became. My head was spinning! *Who was right? Is Christianity the truth or just one of many truths? Was the Bible to be believed literally or had it been edited by several generations? Did Jesus and Buddha basically teach the same thing, but were just interpreted differently by their audiences? Is God personal or impersonal? Is the devil a real person or just the personification of evil forces?* These and other issues flooded my mind and I was wondering who could teach me and help me sort them out.

During my Junior year in college, I learned there was a conservative element of Catholicism that despised the liberal bent of universities and seminaries. These people attempt to stay true to the traditions and doctrine of Roman Catholicism. They greatly honor Mary, the mother of Christ, supposing that honoring Mary brings glory to God. I remember praying the rosary (a series of prayers to God and Mary) three times a day. I also remember traveling to a church to see the supposed face of Christ on a curtain in the church. I didn't see it at first, but after awhile I could make out the outline of a face. Though interesting, none of

these traditional experiences brought true relief to my soul.

During my last semester of college, I met the girl of my dreams. Elaine didn't have all the answers, but when I was with her I thought that God must indeed be good. My relationship with her ended my interest in the priesthood and we were soon married and began a family. But the question remained: what can I hold on to that is truly true?

One day my brother Ed and his wife Anne visited Elaine and me and told us that we needed to be saved. I asked them to explain to me what "saved" meant. They didn't give me a very convincing answer, but they told me that if I put my trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, I could have a right relationship with God. A few days later, my brother sent me an article by evangelist Luis Palau that was all about the cross of Christ. Palau stated that on the cross the Lord Jesus Christ took the sin of the whole world on Himself and died for our sin as our

substitute. Christ did this so that whoever believed in Him would be forgiven, no matter how great their sin. I read the article over several times. It made me want to read the Bible again for understanding.

I went to Canisius College in Buffalo, New York, a college associated with the Society of Jesus (or Jesuits).

As I read the Bible again, I came across a verse that struck a nerve. I think it will strike a nerve with you too if you think about it. Ephesians 2:3 says that without Christ we are "by nature children of wrath." This means

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that we are born in so sinful a state that unless we get a new nature, our fallen nature (i.e. our natural self) will keep us under God's wrath (i.e. His anger) forever.

When I considered Ephesians 2:3, I could see that it was contrary to what I had learned in college and in church. In those places they didn't talk about God's wrath. They told me that people are basically good and if we love our neighbor, then God will accept us into heaven. I had not been educated about God's wrath, and thinking about this concept made me fear for the first time that I might not qualify for heaven.

I sure didn't want to spend eternity in hell apart from God, so my search for truth became even more intense. I wanted to know what was really true. I decided to go without food and seek out the truth. Little did I know that the Truth was actually seeking me.

On November 16, 1981, I was watching a Christian television program. The preacher said clearly that a person could not get to heaven on his own, or by his own power. Then he

explained that Jesus came to earth to die for our sin and rise again from the grave because without Him we could never get to heaven. In other words, because we could never get to heaven on our own, God mercifully made a way for us through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now that made sense to me! All my life I had been trying to get to heaven by my own goodness and my own ability and I had failed miserably.

I remember getting on my knees in the kitchen of our apartment and asking the Lord if it was all true. My heart knew right away that it was true and I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and was truly saved. That night I was born again. I received a new nature from the Lord because His Spirit entered my heart. I was no longer a child of wrath, but rather a son of God through faith in Christ.

Later that night I told my wife that I was born again. She had no idea what I meant and looked at me like I had three heads. She was concerned that my being "born again" would hurt our marriage. By God's grace, Elaine was

also saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ about ten months later (that is a story all by itself). And our marriage has been blessed by the Lord. Six children and one grandchild later she is still the woman of my dreams.

I wish that I could say that I have perfectly followed the Lord since that day when He revealed Himself to me, but I would be a liar if I did. I can honestly say that God rewards those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). And I can say that the Bible is entirely true (John 17:17), and that Jesus is entirely true (John 14:6). You, too, can be saved through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone (Acts 16:31). He can do for you what He has done for me.

Pastor Joe O'Neill is a long-time member of IFCA International and serves as pastor of Mt. Hope Bible Church in Grass Lake, MI. He also is a member of the IFCA Communications / Publications Committee. He may be reached at <josephoneill@mthopebible.org>

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Understanding Terms in Roman Catholic Evangelism

— Larry E. Miller —



Reviewing Pastor Joseph O'Neill's testimony in this issue of VOICE was a moving experience for me. His clear declaration of becoming truly saved reminded me of so many similar stories by former Roman Catholics during thirty plus years of ministry in New Orleans. Something that stood out in Pastor O'Neill's testimony was the number of terms that seem very important to understand—terms such as faith, faith in Jesus Christ alone, born again, what is “truly true,” the issue of authority, the Bible.

CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF TERMS

During recent years I have been able to present a seminar in several churches aimed at helping them more effectively and lovingly evangelize lost

Roman Catholic people. When I receive feedback from the participants, one of the most helpful parts of the seminar seems to be the comparison of terms that are differently understood by most Roman Catholic and evangelicals. Often evangelicals will conclude that a particular Roman Catholic person is saved because of the use of certain terms. They may say, “yes I was born again,” or “yes, I have received Christ,” or “yes, I believe I am going to heaven based on faith.” However, in many cases their Catholic friend actually mean something different than our Bible based understanding.

The differences in meaning are real and determinative when one attempts to communicate the biblical grace Gospel. God gave us the Holy Scriptures as a written revelation of “words,” words with intended meaning, and meaning with intention of being understood.

DIFFERENTLY UNDERSTOOD TERMS

In this article I will present, in summary form, several examples of

terms that need clarification in the process of sharing the Gospel with our Roman Catholic friends.

AUTHORITY

This issue often arises in a person's mind and sometimes is expressed verbally with questions like, “*How do I really know what truth is?*” or “*Who am I to believe when I hear what appear to be contradictory ideas about how to get to heaven?*” or “*We are just sharing different opinions and my opinion is as valid as yours.*”

As Biblicists our ultimate authority is the inerrant Holy Scriptures. We attempt to be diligent in developing accurate understanding of biblical/theological terms. A logical question might be, “*well, doesn't a Roman Catholic person do the same?*” A typical Roman Catholic lay person may or may not understand he has a different approach to the authority issue. Three important tenants of hierarchical Roman Catholicism dominate the approach to the issue of what the truth is supposed to be for them.

First, even in the post-Vatican II environment, the official Roman

Catholic position is that Tradition (note capital “T”) is authoritative alongside, if not above, Scripture. Note this statement in *The Documents of Vatican II*: “both sacred tradition and sacred scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense and devotion and reverence... Sacred tradition and sacred scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, which is committed to the church.”¹

Second, according to the Roman Catholic approach to hermeneutics (Bible interpretation) as declared in *The Documents of Vatican II* (p. 118), “The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed down, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church.” Thus what the Roman Catholic Church declares a passage of Scripture to mean is considered to be the infallible interpretation in the mind of a Roman Catholic person.

Third, the official Roman Catholic dogma emphatically declares that apostolic authority to govern the church belongs to the Pope and the bishops: “the apostles took care to appoint successors in this hierarchically structured society... Therefore, this sacred synod (Vatican II) teaches that by divine institution bishops have succeeded to the place of the apostles as shepherds of the Church, and that he who hears them, hears Christ” (*The Documents of Vatican II*, pp. 39-40).

PAYMENT OF SIN’S PENALTY

We in IFCA International understand the Bible to teach that the physical and spiritual death of Jesus Christ on the Cross was and is the adequate, and the only adequate, payment for the penalty for sin pronounced upon mankind by God. It satisfied the just demands of God. Therefore, He can now justify, forgive, deliver us from condemnation while remaining a just God. (Romans 3:26) And Christ’s death was a “once for all event” (Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:10-12). He will not, He cannot, be crucified again as payment for sin.

Roman Catholic dogma declares the necessity of the death of Christ as a payment for sin.

However, they teach that Christ’s one death is not considered a sufficient payment. This represents a major deficiency in their thinking. Follow carefully these statements from *The Complete and Updated Catechism of the Catholic Church*, hereafter referred to as *The Catechism*.² This work is widely considered the most accurate and authoritative post Vatican II instruction manual for Roman Catholics (and it bears the imprimatur dated in 1994 of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, who is now Pope Benedict XVI).

*However, they teach
that Christ’s one death
is not considered a
sufficient payment.*

“The new life received in Christian initiation [baptism] has not abolished... the inclination to sin... which remains in the baptized such that with the help of the grace of Christ they may prove themselves in the struggle of the Christian life. This is the struggle of *conversion* directed towards holiness and *eternal life* to which the Lord never ceases to call us” (Paragraph 1426, emphasis mine). “Grave sin [committed after baptism, which places us in the church] deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the ‘eternal punishment’ of sin” (Paragraph 1472). In other words, committing a grave sin after one is in the body of Christ by grace changes our standing such that eternal life has been lost. So according to *The Catechism* “Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church, above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace... It is to them that the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification” (Paragraph 1446).

These and numbers of other statements could be included. In summary,

the official Roman Catholic view is that the death of Christ was necessary to get one started along the way toward eternal life, toward heaven. But once a person gets sidetracked by sin, he loses this “gift of grace” and must be converted again. And this conversion requires some works on his part, in order to establish once again a life he hopes will lead to eternal life. In other words, the one death of Christ was not sufficient to pay for all future sins.

When one considers the implications, this is a huge difference in understanding.

BORN AGAIN

If you asked a Roman Catholic person if he is “born again,” he might reply “yes of course.” But he may mean “I was born again when baptized as an infant.” Support for this as the official Roman Catholic view comes from *The Catechism*.

The seven sacraments of the Church: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist [The Mass], Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony are “all instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Paragraph 1114). “The ordained priesthood [ordained by the Roman Catholic Church] guarantees that it really is Christ who acts in the sacraments through the Holy Spirit for the Church” (Paragraph 1120). The sacraments are necessary for salvation (Paragraph 1129). They act *ex opere operato* [literally: “by the very fact of the actions being performed”] (Paragraph 1128). This means independent of any faith on the part of the recipient. And they are *efficacious* because in them Christ himself is at work: it is he who baptizes (Paragraph 1128). Furthermore, “Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church... ‘Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word.’ This sacrament is also called ‘*the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit*’” (Paragraphs 1213, 1215).

Of course as Biblicists we understand that being “born again” is

synonymous with “regeneration” (Titus 3:5) which occurs in response to the convincing ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11) and our faith response (John 3:16), even faith alone (Ephesians 2:8,9). This is a destiny determining difference.

SAVED BY GRACE

Surely we would agree here. Classically evangelicals have understood grace to mean “God’s unmerited favor” or “God’s riches at Christ’s expense,” or “All that God is now free to do for us on the basis of the Cross” (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:8,9 among many).

But when a Roman Catholic person speaks of being saved by grace he most likely understands grace to mean “merited favor.” And this understanding is based on *The Catechism*. Regarding merit, “Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, *no one can merit the initial grace* of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, *we can then* merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification... *and for the attainment of eternal life*” [emphasis mine] (Paragraph 2010).

FAITH

We might define faith as believing and relying on the Bible. As regarding salvation we would define it as trust or reliance on the finished work of Christ without any meriting work as a condition for that salvation

*No one can have
God as Father who
does not have the Church
[i.e. the Roman Catholic
Church] as Mother.*

The typical Roman Catholic person might understand faith as something like believing in God and what the Roman Catholic Church says. In *The Catechism* we read, “Whoever says ‘I believe’ says ‘I pledge myself to what we believe’” (Paragraph 185). So a per-

son of faith believes what the Roman Catholic Church has determined is to be believed. Also, “‘Believing’ is an ecclesial act. The Church’s faith precedes, engenders, supports, and nourishes our faith. The Church is the mother of all believers. ‘No one can have God as Father who does not have the Church [i.e. the Roman Catholic Church] as Mother’” (Paragraph 181).

Furthermore, “The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it... Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation” (Paragraph 1816). This statement certainly sounds like faith + works as a condition for salvation. And this is typically what a Roman Catholic lay person understands. In a Bible Study I was once conducting, the educated and sincere woman spoke with knowledge beyond my expectation. To the question, “How does one get to heaven?” she quickly answered, “Jesus died to open the doors of the kingdom that I might get there by faith plus good works, perhaps by way of Purgatory.”

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JUSTIFICATION

Some Roman Catholics (and some evangelicals) may have a sufficient appreciation for the issue of justification to enter into conversation about it. The common evangelical understanding of justification is that a person is justified or made "right with God" when he is reconciled to God through faith in the person and redemptive work accomplished by Christ. Justification means a person is declared righteous by God and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Some of the readers will be familiar with Luther's declaration, "It [this doctrine of justification] is the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*, the article by which the church stands or falls."

Herein lies a very basic difference we have with the Roman Catholic system. The decisions of The Council of Trent on justification, which met from 1546-1563, "are still the official doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church."³ As this Council was concluding, the inherent view of justification (as opposed to the imputed view) was approved by a vote of 32 to 5, and the Council opted for a transformationist view of justification.⁴ This view teaches the gradual input of righteousness,

slowly making a person more justified, more right with God. And a Roman Catholic never knows when he has received enough righteousness, therefore he can never be certain of eternal salvation. Even to this day it is considered heresy if one claims to have certainty of salvation.

What a difference!

DON'T CLOUD AND CONFUSE EVANGELISM

In summary, these and other terms, if differently understood by the evangelical and Roman Catholic individuals, will make communication difficult and often cause the evangelical to assume that the Roman Catholic person is a believer when that may not actually be true. As an example, if a Roman Catholic friend says "yes I was born again and received Jesus Christ as my Savior," you might think, "here is a brother in Christ." But he might be saying, "I was baptized as an infant, thus born again. And I receive Jesus Christ every Sunday when I partake of the Eucharist."

Or if a Roman Catholic friend says yes to the question, "Do you believe the Bible," you might assume we have the same authority base. But your Catholic friend might mean "yes, I believe the Bible plus Tradition. And I really can't interpret the Bible. I will need to depend on the priest to tell me what it means."

Or he might say, "yes I know we are saved by grace." But he may be thinking that grace includes "merited favor," rather than an unmerited gift as we understand the Bible to teach.

So it becomes clear that we must be careful to clarify word meanings in our loving effort to explain the biblical grace Gospel to a lost Roman Catholic person.

¹ Walter M. Abbott and Joseph Gallagher, *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: New York Guild, 1966), p. 117

² *The Complete and Updated Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Double Day, 1995). The numbers indicating location of the information are paragraph numbers not page numbers. This book was originally published as *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City, Rome: Urbi et Orbi Communications, 1994).

³ Klaas Runia, "Justification and Roman Catholicism," in D. A. Carson's *Right with God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), p. 209.

⁴ *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, translated by H.J. Schroeder (London: Herder, 1941), p. 42.

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We Believe The Same Way, Right?

— Frank Eberhardt —



When I was growing up Roman Catholic, we knew we were different from the Protestants. We knew we had the truth and the Protestants were heretics, because we followed an infallible head given to us by Jesus Christ himself and he was superintended by the Holy Spirit so he could make no errors in teaching our Faith, morals and doctrines. He is rightly called the Holy Father, the Pope and the Vicar of Christ. What did those other groups have? They have no unity among their hundreds of denominations and independent churches, yet there has always been One True Church, The Holy Roman Catholic Church. They have no head left to them by Jesus Christ, so they have evident denominational differences and each group believes whatever they interpret their Bible to mean. As Catholics we followed the same beliefs since the time of Our Lord because the word of the Pope, ordained by Christ, is the Word of

God. Did not Our Lord say to Peter and the Apostles, “He who hears you hears me?”

I used to think Protestants did not have all the necessary means of salvation found only in the Church.

As a Catholic, I believed Protestants tampered with the Sacred Scriptures. They changed the number of books from 75 to 66 books because they have no infallible interpretive body (the Church) which believes in all the means of revelation. They believe in the Bible Only. I used to believe that the True Roman Catholic Church has three authorities which agree together to form one truth: the Written Word of Scripture + the Oral Word of Tradition + the Teaching Word of the Church (the Magisterium, or the Pope and Bishops). These three make up the singular Word of God. Because of their “Bible Only” error,

I used to think Protestants did not have all the necessary means of salvation found only in the Church.

I used to think because the Protestants have no ordained priesthood, the Protestants have no means of distributing the grace of the Sacraments, which are necessary for salvation. *And most important*, I used to think Protestants have no means of forgiveness because their worship is merely a preaching service. They have no Eucharistic Celebration in the Mass, which was eternally gifted to us by Christ Himself as our sacrifice and atonement for sin. They have not obeyed the words of Our Lord which say, “He took the bread and broke it saying ‘this is my body which is offered for the sins of the world, do this in remembrance of me.’”

Divine Revelation through Tradition taught us Catholics that outside the Church there is no salvation, yet God would perhaps allow the followers of Protestant denominations into heaven if they were sincere to maintain good works and have been baptized. I used to think Protestants were incompletely taught, and actually did not know the truth. So it was through no fault of their own that they did not join themselves to the *one true church established by Jesus Christ for the salvation of souls*.

When I was Roman Catholic all of the above is what I believed about Scripture and salvation. I knew I was different from the Protestants, Baptists and Independent Churches. My beliefs, my Church, my leadership and my hope of salvation were all different. And my beliefs tied me to Catholicism, not to Christ, because the doctrine and theology I relied upon were not Bible-based but Church based. Catholics today know the differences. Just ask a Catholic person if they would ever leave Catholicism, and you will receive a litany of reasons why they cannot leave the One True Church which is the hope and means of their salvation.

So, why do I often hear Bible believers ask, "We believe the same way as Catholics, right?"

THERE REALLY IS A DIFFERENCE

Many Christians don't know how Catholicism works. They don't understand the Catholic system of theology because they aren't Catholic and never were Catholic. But consider that

Catholicism is the third largest world religion with 1.3 billion people, and that nearly 1 of every 4 people you will meet in the United States will be Roman Catholic. This means a basic understanding of Roman Catholicism is necessary if you want to converse discerningly with Catholic people about spiritual things.

*Many Christians
don't know how
Catholicism works.*

You need to understand Catholic beliefs and the meaning of their words. We may use the same words, even Biblical words, and Catholic people nod their head in the affirmative. They may say they believe in Jesus, and Bible believing Christians are satisfied. But nothing is further from the truth. Our dictionary for Biblical words is different and that changes the way Catholic people see the truth.

Our doctrinal understanding will often begin in the same way, using the same words. But the different theological dictionary of Catholicism quickly requires them to wander down a different path of understanding. This changes the focus, the way their mind recognizes the truth. By viewing Catholic theology through the eyes of a Roman Catholic, it will be easier to illustrate how one's mind can be blinded to Biblical truth.

Example # 1: The Virgin Birth Through Catholic Eyes

Let's start our examination with the Virgin Birth. We say we believe in the same Jesus, who through a miracle of God, the Virgin Birth, was born the only begotten Son of God. We call this the Incarnation ("*God with us*").

But here is how the Virgin Birth is seen through Catholic eyes.

Jesus is the sinless God man who came into the world by the Virgin Birth through the miracle of the Immaculate Conception. And the Immaculate Conception describes the birth of Mary.

BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN (One who believes the Gospel)	ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY (One who believes the teaching of Rome)
Regenerated at baptism of the Spirit	Regenerated at baptism of water
Justified once by faith	Grows in justification by the Sacraments and good works
Saved by God's unmerited grace	Saved by earning /meriting grace
Saved for good works	Saved by good works
Saved for all eternity	Saved until a mortal sin is committed
Salvation is offered to those outside the church	Salvation is offered through the Church
The Lord's Supper is a memorial	The Mass is a sacrifice
By faith receives Jesus spiritually, once (in the soul)	At Mass receives Jesus physically, frequently (in the stomach)
Purified by the blood of Jesus	Purified by the fires of purgatory
Becomes a saint when God justifies	Becomes a saint if the Pope declares
Is a priest (priesthood of the believer)	Needs a priest

In order to bring Jesus into the world, God first needed to eliminate "Original Sin" from the birth of His Son. God did this (in the Catholic's mind) by making the birth of Mary immaculate, or without the stain of "Original Sin." God guarded the sinless birth of Christ by insuring the eternal sinless condition of his mother. Mary, now sinless, could not transmit Original Sin to her son at birth. This is the miracle of God.

God's choice of the Holy Virgin Mary led to her being eternally protected from sin, her never dying, her Assumption (Rapture) into heaven, and her coronation as Queen of Heaven by God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus holds her in special reverence as she has become a helper to salvation. Catholic Theology refers to her as the Mediatrix of all Grace, another mediator. She is the Coredemptrix, another advocate. Thus the prayer of Scripture has been fulfilled which says: "Hail Mary full of

grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death." Amen

*Catholic Theology
refers to her as the
Mediatrix of all Grace,
another mediator.*

But we need to readjust our focus. Who are we discussing, Jesus or Mary? Because Catholic theology makes Jesus' birth dependent upon having a sinless mother, they do not see it as the direct act of God as Scripture teaches in Isaiah 7:14 (*"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son"*).

According to the Bible, the sign of Isaiah 7:14 was the virgin birth of Christ through the direct act of God. But according to Catholic theology, Jesus' sinless nature was dependent upon Mary's Immaculate Conception.

If God could insure the mother's sinless birth by His direct act, why could He not insure His Son's sinless birth in the same way? The miracle of Christ's birth in Catholic theology is instead linked to the unscriptural miracle of his mother's immaculate birth.

Yes, both Catholics and Protestants say they believe in the Virgin Birth and the Incarnation. But the definitions in our theological dictionaries are different. They look to Scripture, Tradition and the Church for their theological definitions. We only look to Scripture. And when we do, Biblical theology does not teach that the Birth of Christ is linked to or results in the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the eternally sinless condition of Mary, the Coronation of Mary as Queen of

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Heaven or the Advocacy of Mary for our salvation. If you are a Bible-believing Protestant, do you hold to these beliefs? No, of course not. So how do you answer the question: "we believe the same way, right?"

Example # 2: The Way to Heaven Through Catholic Eyes

Some Christians think that Catholic theology does not influence the way Catholic people believe. They say "*Catholics don't know about all those extra things. They just believe the basics about Jesus and that's enough to be saved.*" Using the same examination method as above, what are the basics all Catholic people understand about the question, "Why are you going to heaven?"

As a Catholic I believed that Jesus is our Savior because he died for our sins. I also believed that the Catholic Church commemorates this act of salvation daily through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass where we offer and

receive Jesus (and the grace of the sacrament needed for salvation) in the form of bread and wine for the forgiveness of sin. I also believed our parents help us be born again through the Sacrament of Baptism. It was at baptism where we began our life in Christ. As Catholics we make a public profession of faith in Jesus by the age of 18 in the Sacrament of Confirmation. After Confirmation, if we sin we ask Jesus for forgiveness through the mediation of the priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Every Catholic knows you cannot be saved through grace alone because Scripture says that "Faith without works is dead (James 2:20)." Catholics thus seek to obey the 10 Commandments as a guideline of good works. Knowingly disobeying the 10 Commandments, breaking them deliberately, would constitute a serious sin and the loss of all grace to the soul. Dying in this condition would result in a separation from the grace of Christ for eternity.

Jesus our Savior has given to us His Church, the seven Sacraments, the 10 Commandments and more as a help to salvation. Leaving or refusing to enter His Church is the only sin He cannot forgive.

This is the understanding I had as an average Roman Catholic about the way to heaven. The dictionary of Catholic theology does say Jesus is Savior, but Catholics also believe they receive grace to be saved in the Sacraments and they do good works because they believe that faith alone is not enough for salvation. This is not salvation through faith in Christ alone as Bible doctrine affirms in Eph 2:8-9, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.*"

CONCLUSION

As a born again Christian my theology, my beliefs are dictated by the Word of God. The Catholic Church uses a dogmatic theological approach,

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beginning with a basic premise and building upon that premise with quotations from Scripture, Tradition and Church Teaching, whatever helps them prove their dogma (their premise). For the Roman Catholics, the Word of God does not dictate their beliefs. The Church decides them.

We need to understand the differences and try to reach our Roman Catholic friends with the truth. Catholicism, through its Tradition and Church Teaching, has so shaded the meaning of Scripture that Catholic people are blind to its truth. We need to be the preachers who lovingly reason with them, making them think about their sin and lost condition.

When I was a Roman Catholic seminarian studying for the Priesthood, someone handed me a Gospel tract and walked away. I immediately took that tract and threw it in the garbage because I believed I had the truth in Christ. If that person had stopped and intelligently spoken

to me for just a moment I could have heard the Gospel then, not four years later when I came to Christ. We need to obey the Lord and go and teach the Gospel because "*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Rom 10:17).

After reading all of this, you would have to say that we don't believe the same way as Catholics, do we?

Frank Eberhardt is a former Roman Catholic seminarian. He came to know Christ as his Savior and founded Gospel Outreach International to Roman Catholics. He is a member of IFCA International. He may be reached at P.O. Box 905, Taylors, SC 29687-0905.

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The Gospel and the Power of Hope

— Steve Cornell —



Have you ever had anyone ask you to explain the reason for your hope? Ever thought of hope as a starting point for conversation about the gospel? As I was listening to a great song about hope (*In Christ Alone*, see below), I thought about First Century Christians who seemed to have little earthly reason for hope yet displayed it so powerfully that others inquired of its source. These believers were encouraged to, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).

Why was their hope so powerfully attractive? Could people look at my life and be drawn to inquire of the hope they see in it? Does our church display this kind of attractive hope? These are the questions that bothered me as I reflected on my First Century brothers and sisters. Think about it. When was the last time someone asked you to give a reason for your hope? Squirming under the conviction, I pon-

dered the possibility that First Century believers were noted for their hope simply because it seemed incongruent. Circumstantially their lives appeared hopeless so their hope was radiant. Perhaps believers who don’t appear to have desperate circumstances must accept a different basis for evangelistic appeal. But is hope conditioned on one’s circumstances? Is it only able to shine in our desperation? There must be more to it.

*Ever thought of
hope as a starting point
for conversation about
the gospel?*

Hope, according to Scripture, is forged through a process familiar to all believers. This is described in Romans 5:2-5 “we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

Suffering, perseverance, character, hope (hearts filled with love by the Holy Spirit). The gracious and transformational influences of the Spirit within always lead through this path to hope.

But how would people see hope in my life? I was still bothered by this question. Is there a cultural backdrop for hope in affluent societies? In apparently good circumstances? Clearly, we see a lot of despair in our culture. But perhaps it comes from the other direction—the Ecclesiastes syndrome—the vanity of vanity experience. Whatever the cause, cultural despair is real in affluent cultures. Drug and alcohol abuse, deeply fractured and dysfunctional relationships, addictions of all kinds, alarming rates of suicide... these are dominant features of affluent cultures. Perhaps the affluence itself elevates the despair. After all, we have enough stuff to keep us happy, don’t we? Evidently there is occasion for hope to shine and to draw inquirers even in affluent cultures.

In my culture, hope shines in its complementary features of peace, contentment, simplicity, generosity, joy, security, and servanthood. If my life shines with these qualities, it radiates hope. If, however, people see anxiety, restlessness, greed, selfishness and despair, I have nothing to cause them to inquire. They can find these things everywhere.

But let's think more deeply about hope. How should our lives be affected by the event scripture calls the blessed hope—the coming of the Lord. How should anticipation of the return of Jesus affect me? We don't hear much about this today. I remember the annual prophecy conferences from my younger years. They seem rare now. In fact, some Christians are fearful of focusing on prophecy. They see over-emphases (like reading prophecy into everything that happens in the Middle East) and they overreact by avoiding discussions about it! They under-emphasize large portions of Scripture or try to reinterpret them into the present when they clearly deal with the future.

But what happens to a Church when it loses its future focus, its expectation for Jesus' return? Does it become inappropriately fixated on the here and now? Do they exchange eschatology for trendy environmentalism? Does the outward man who is perishing become so important that the inner man is not being renewed day by day as intended?

What happens to believers who forget that "our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (Philippians 3:20-21).

We need to place our hope into a larger context. For all believers, hope

(like celebration of communion) has a past, present, and future dimension. At the Lord's Table, we "take the bread," that is, we "do this" (present), "in remembrance of Jesus" (past), "until He comes" (future). This is how we should view hope! It is based on what God did for us in Christ's death and resurrection (past); it is evident to unbelievers as they look at our lives (present) and hope has an anchor in the future. It radiates with settled and transformational assurance. According to the apostle John, the future dimension of hope has a transformational affect in the present: "we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3). And, Scripture reminds us that "faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1).

There are many earthly reasons for despair. Examples of human depravity bombard us each day and are emotionally overwhelming. The daily televised streams of human carnage are profoundly sad. But depravity is not merely out in the world somewhere distant to us. It runs like a fault-line with deceptive twists and turns through every human heart and it cries for rescue. Some people take lightly (even ridicule) the language of rescue and salvation found in the bible. They bristle at the notion of needing to be saved from sin. But the language clearly fits the condition.

Given the pervasive reality of depravity, it's not hard for me to accept the biblical categories of sin and salvation. We are all self-evident sinners. We continually fall short and transgress. Habitually, we think and do evil. We need God's mercy and forgiveness. This is why the Scripture indiscriminately states that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

*There are many
earthly reasons
for despair. Examples
of human depravity
bombard us each day*

Some suggest that we need religion. I totally disagree. Religion is a man-made system of seeking God's approval. Like pagan mythology, religion positions humans before an angry deity and demand that they offer something to pacify the wrath of the god. What we need is the mercy and grace of God! In religion, I hope to do sufficient good things to offset the bad I have done and to avert the just wrath of God. This is the complete opposite of what the bible teaches about God's forgiveness and salvation.

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Don't misunderstand. The Scripture speaks clearly about God's wrath and sinners deserving it. But it equally describes us as those who are unable to change things by our own strength and resources. We are too weak in our sinfulness to change our standing with the Creator.

This is where God's love accomplishes what we are unable to do. "God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love - not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins" (1 John 4:9-11). Unlike pagan mythology and man-made religion, the Bible offers the "appeasement of the wrath of God by the love of God through the gift of God" (John Stott). Undeserving though I am, my only response is to receive as a gift this salvation through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:3-6).

It shouldn't surprise us that the apostle John wrote concerning Jesus that, "all who believed him and accepted him, he (God) gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). It should, however, alarm us to read that, "whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him" (John 3:36). Sound too simple? For whom? It wasn't easy for God the Father and Jesus our Savior. God did for us what we could not do for ourselves (Galatians 2:21).

This is not religion. It is love. All sinners, which is a way of saying "all people", need God's love offered through Jesus Christ. Not surprisingly Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Jesus inspired hope in his despairing disciples by reminding them that, "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." (John 14:2-3).

Perhaps our hope is deficient because it is not engaged in the fullness of past, present and future. This

thought challenges me. I hope it will do the same for you.

Reflect on this great song that captures hope based on past, present and future:

In Christ Alone

In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all—
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid—
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine—
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

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Our Self-Created Dilemma

— Henry Vosburgh —



Many popular expressions describe the occasional situation where no alternative of outcomes has a favorable result. These are times when we find ourselves “between a rock and hard place” or faced with a “Catch-22,” a situation in which contradictory standards create an inevitable violation. We have all experienced a circumstance when we are left “with no place to go,” “on the horns of a dilemma,” or in a condition described in the computer world as “deadlock.”

A lesser-used phrase to describe such difficulties is Morton’s Fork. This comes from English history. John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury under the rule of Henry VII, reasoned the taxing of all subjects of the realm “by arguing the obviously rich could afford to pay and the obviously poor were living frugally and thus had savings and could pay, too” (Online Etymology Dictionary). It’s no wonder this was called a “fork,” for the only choice an Englishman had was to decide upon which fiscal tine he would be stuck.

We all have these circumstances in life from time to time. But it’s when we have created these situations ourselves we realize only too late we just “painted ourselves into a corner.” We throw our hands in the air and ask, “What was I thinking?” Most of the time, we weren’t! We went about what seemed to be business as usual, and before we knew it, we created our own dilemma. Being unable to reverse course, we have to choose which fork prong to be skewered upon.

In my role as a church planter, I often encounter what can be called a self-created dilemma in our efforts to plant churches

THE SELF-CREATED DILEMMA

In my role as a church planter, I often encounter what can be called a self-created dilemma in our efforts to plant churches - our own Morton’s Fork. Here’s the way it happens.

Prong 1

- A challenge is offered to churches about advancing their ministries through church extension / planting new churches.
- The challenge is well-received because church planting is biblical, church planting is needed, and generally speaking a passion for church planting exists. Furthermore, because we always have time and resources for what we really want to do, I am finding that these churches do have resources to offer as well. As a planter, when this is noted, I get really excited!

- However, what is next communicated by these churches is a condition: they will engage in such an effort when and only when they can meet and approve the man that is committed to lead the church plant. This checks my excitement, for harvest laborers are few and need to be prayed into the harvest. So, my challenge when facing this stipulation is to find a qualified man who will accept the responsibility to lead in planting a new church.

Prong 2

- A challenge is offered to men who will rise up to meet the need for leaders to

plant churches. The spiritual needs are obvious, and churches are looking for men that will answer the call.

- The challenge is well-received because church planting is on the minds of a growing number of leaders today. For numerous reasons, I am finding more receptive hearts in many ministers about planting churches than what I first encountered when entering this work just nineteen years ago. So in the course of recruiting, when I sense a man is open to planting, I get excited again!
- However, what is next communicated by the typical potential recruit is a condition: he will engage the planting ministry when and only when he can enlist the commitment of the resources of a church or network of churches to provide security. He is only willing if he can be assured of financial and relational security. Again, my excitement gets checked. This is when the self-created dilemma surfaces.

We have on the one hand churches willing to engage as a network with their resources if they can see the planter. And on the other hand, we have a planter willing to engage if he can see the church network with their resources. The equation they propose is simple:

Church planter + Church/network with resources = New Church Planted

We have the elements identified, but the equation breaks down when both have to see commitment from the other before the sum can be realized. Hence the self-created dilemma; because of the shortfall of commitment on both parts, planting is hindered. The unfortunate result is that the needs which exist continue to go unmet. We who are commanded to go forward into the world hinder our progress because we have in effect tied our own shoelaces together.

HOW TO ADDRESS THIS DILEMMA

This self-created dilemma needs to be addressed. And thankfully, there is a solution to this problem. The

more effective way to address this dilemma is to prevent it from happening at all. That is, leaders and networks should approach church planting differently. The change in approach is a simple one, yet it is pivotal and will have a completely different outcome. Instead of a “lose-lose situation,” it will start producing a “win-win” one.

The necessary change to prevent this dilemma is the intentional removal of demands on the parts of both the church(es) and the potential planters. We need to change from the posture of having to “see” the other operating to a posture of believing God for the provision of everything we need to fulfill His commission. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, “for we walk by faith and not by sight.” This change moves us from walking by sight to walking by faith in church planting.

Churches burdened with the need for planting new churches must put their feet in the Jordan and simply start the planting process, knowing

Bridge to Life Ministries

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that doing so is the will of God - by virtue of the Great Commission and by virtue of biblical example of the early church in Acts. The church is to advance into this world with the message of the Gospel. And everywhere we go, we are to bring forth the assembly of the saints to continue that proclamation. The advancing ministry in Acts did not wait until a man from outside the fellowship was found to do that work. The church in faith sent its own witnesses, and God provided whatever was needed from whatever source He deemed fitting.

Potential leaders burdened about the need for planting churches also must put their feet in the Jordan, knowing that as they seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, all the things necessary for survival will be increased to them. This includes food, clothing, shelter, and all other needed resources (i.e. the security dynamics). In Acts, when men were led by the Spirit to pursue ministry, they went forth in faith. And again, God supplied all their need.

RELATING TO VISION AMERICA

In light of our stated agenda for Vision America, we would do well to make sure that we begin rightly. This means not withholding commitment until what we can see is verified. Doing so creates our own dilemma and prevents our advance of ministry. Rather, both churches and planters need to step forward in faith. When God sees our collective faith in Him for the common pursuit of planting churches, He will bring all of the necessary elements together for a fruitful outcome. Doing so will prevent dilemmas, our own Morton's Fork, and freely allows our advance toward the fulfillment of God's will in planting churches.

☞ **DEATH OF HIS SAINTS** ☞



ROBERT L. WIEDUWILT
Robert Wieduwilt went to be with the Lord on

November 2, 2007. He was born April 19, 1913 in St. Louis, MO. Bob or Rob as he was known to his family married Dorothy Rentz August 31, 1940. They graduated from Moody Bible Institute in 1944. In 1948 Bob joined the IFCA. They then served in ministries at Oak Hills (MN) Fellowship (1944-46); Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota before moving to Hiawatha, Kansas in 1979 where they served at Faith Baptist Church. Then in 1982 they began serving as associate missionaries with RBC Ministries – now known as Bible Impact Ministries.

In 1998 they moved to Kansas City, MO. There they were involved with Blue Ridge Bible Church. Bob continued to write a column "Bible Talk" and do a weekly rest home service until he was 93. In 2000 they celebrated their 60th wedding

anniversary. Dorothy's health failed and she preceded him in death on December 15, 2000.

He was also preceded in death by his parents and two sisters. Survivors include two sons, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

VIRGIL ETCHESON

Virgil Lawrence Etcheson went to be with the Lord on Dec. 9, 2007. He was born on Aug. 9, 1916, to LeRoy Etcheson and Mary May Engle Etcheson. He served in the United States Navy during WWII from 1942 to 1945. He was united in marriage to Mary Elizabeth Ewers of Carlsbad, NM on Jan. 22, 1946, in Girard, Kan. He was a T.V. technician in Kansas City, MO until he was ordained into the ministry in 1956.

He preached the gospel from 1956 until he retired in 2000. He joined the IFCA in 1962.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife. He is survived by three brothers, three sisters and a number of nieces and nephews.

Piedmont Baptist College

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Book Notes

A Contemporary Handbook for Weddings & Funerals and Other Occasions

Aubrey Malphurs & Keith Willhite
editors, Kregel, 2003
383 pages, \$15.83

Often the highlights of pastoral ministry involve those special events in the lives of individuals in the church. They create memories which transcend the ordinary. Malphurs and Willhite have compiled the thoughts of 20-plus experienced pastors and professors with regard to weddings, funerals, communion, baptism, and ordination services. While the event itself may dictate the content of what is said and experienced, it is good to include something exceptional or unusual as well.

This book provides an abundance of fresh and creative ideas. It has the potential of delivering us from stale and hackneyed procedures, and putting at our fingertips a plethora of workable suggestions. If your idea engine seems to have stalled, this book will administer a substantial jump-start.

Before You Move, A Guide to Making Transitions in Ministry

John R. Cionca, Kregel, 2004
246 pages, \$11.43

One of the most difficult and uncertain times of ministry life involves facing the prospect of having to change ministries. Whether you think you are being forced to leave, or merely investigating new opportunities, much of the decision should be determined by answering the right questions. Just as a semaphore guides traffic, so there are signals a pastor should observe when assessing the viability of a move. Personal and congregational signals, read properly, are essential for a right decision. Because we may lose objectivity during these times, it is all the more important to view the situation clearly.

Cionca's book makes this possible by asking the right questions. While

few face the danger of staying too long, most Christian workers face the danger of not staying long enough. Problems with the present ministry may be smaller or larger than we think. All ministries have challenges, most of which will be repeated in subsequent ministries. This book's wisdom will greatly benefit you in evaluating those unique problems and challenges. Whether you stay at your ministry or relocate, this book will be a handy guide to chart you through those troubled waters.

Bible Facts & Figures

Tim Dowley, Kregel, 2001
32 pages, \$8.79

Kregel has added another pictorial guide for the delight of all chart lovers. More information is given in these 32 pages than one can imagine. Historical and Political Timelines, along with colorful pictures on every page, provide data that furnishes an excellent overview of pithy but important information. The charts generally follow the chronology of the Bible and can easily be used in teen through adult teaching settings.

The only caution regarding information in this book would be on page 7 where it suggests that Rameses II is the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Conservative scholarship goes with Amenhotep II, who ruled hundreds of years earlier. Also on page 25, which lists the seven last sayings of Christ on the Cross, most scholars reverse numbers four and five. All in all, this is a great reference book to have readily available every time you study.

*Reviewed by Pastor Ken Hornok,
Salt Lake City, UT*

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More Than Words

“Failure is the mother of success” states an ancient Asian proverb. Failure in evangelism was a stern teacher when I was a new missionary. Four years of traditional American-style evangelism proved fruitless in the context of conservative Chinese culture. It was painful to report that on our first furlough from Hong Kong in the early 1970s, and entire term of earnest tract distribution, faithful door-to-door visitation, and fervent evangelistic preaching had produced not even one new believer in Christ.

“Why?” I had asked my Chinese assistant at the Bible College. *“Because your methods are impersonal and verbal,”* he replied. *“The Chinese characters in your tracts have a Christian meaning unfathomable to the Buddhist mind. Everything about you is foreign. You are a stranger giving strange words, without the context of a caring relationship. They have no idea what you mean. They can’t see it.”* Though not his exact words, that was the gist of his sympathetic reply.

My furlough provided time for reflection. Should I throw in the towel? This unspoken question drove me to immerse my broken heart in the Gospels. Soon I was face-to-face with

the compassionate Christ, whose serving ministry preceded His saving ministry (Matthew 20:28). His deeds of mercy and service to human needs were magnets drawing the multitudes to hear His message. Was that the answer? I had to find out.

Upon returning to the field, we launched an innovative type of compassion evangelism through a service center in the government housing project. Soon, over a thousand local people carried laminated membership cards to attend our classes and activities. With the help of young, dedicated Chinese staffers, we served among them sixty hours per week. Deep relationships were established. Teens and adults started reading the tracts and asking questions. Doors opened wide as we visited members’ families. Neighbors flocked to the evangelistic meetings. Buddhists came to saving faith in Christ and were disciplined. Two churches were started in two terms, and they reproduced new churches repeatedly in the following years.

The old saying is true: *“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”* Nurturing redemptive relationships through

serving “felt” needs brought deeper spiritual needs to the surface that were previously unfelt. Resistance to the gospel was melted by compassion in action.

In all this, we learned that evangelism is more than words. Preaching is central, but it is not enough. To reach those who are resistant, communicating about Christ must be couched in the context of compassion (1 John 3:16-18). Calvary love flows from a broken spirit and heals wounded hearts (Psalm 51:17). We need to let our hearts break with the things that break the heart of God, and nothing breaks His heart more than the loss and brokenness of people without Christ. Compassion in action is the cornerstone of effective evangelism. We pour out our lives in compassion so they see Christ’s love through us and are willing to listen when we preach.

Bill Commons

ABWE Message. Used with permission.

IFCA Evangelism Committee
Email: evangelism@ifca.org

2008 IFCA CHURCH EXTENSION CONFERENCE

June 18-20, 2008, Eugene, OR, Hilton Hotel

Sponsored by: IFCA Church Extension Council

Contact Church Extension Council Chairman Fran Gardner Jr
for information about registration

(941) 351-1453 sarasotagardner@hotmail.com

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Fellowship News



Pictured here is Dr. Steve Van Horn and Bob Allen of International Training and Equipping Ministries. They conducted a Pastors Conference in Goma, Democratic Rep. of Congo on inductive Bible study and expository preaching.



Cicero Bible Church held an installation service for their new pastor Rev. Ron Kooyman. Pictured are: Pastor Dave Bauer of BRM, Pastor Ron Kooyman and Pastor Chuck Svoboda of BRM along with the church Board members and visiting pastors. CBC is the birth-place of IFCA back in 1930 when Dr. William McCarrell was pastor.



Les Lofquist spoke in Edinburg, TX at Rio Grande Bible Institute and Bibleville for their Founders Week. Pictured here is (L to R): Prof. Dave Love (FIM missionary on loan to RGBI), Prof. Julio Varela (RGBI and Calvary Theological Seminary grad), Les Lofquist, and Dr. Larry Windle (IFCA member and President of RGBI).



The Northern California Regional met at Fellowship Bible Church of Belmont, Steve Wong host pastor. Pastor Rick Gregory of Grace Bible Church, Fair Oaks, CA was the speaker.

India Report

Our team of three, (Dan and Julie Fredericks, and Pastor Daniel Gutierrez of American Indian Bible Institute) traveled on our “church strengthening” (Acts 16:5) trip to India, departing from Detroit on February 18, and returning to the United States on March 6.

We traveled by plane, SUV, taxi, train, canoe and at times on foot. We taught and ministered the Word of God forty hours in various teaching sessions. We traveled from Delhi, to the region of Manipur, to the state of Chhattisgarh. We appeal to our IFCA fellowship to pray, and as able, give to the needs of these IFCA ministries in India.



Ministry in Delhi to pastors and new believers, under the leadership of pastor Sanjeeb Sahu, serving with Source of Light India (an IFCA member organization).



Daniel Gutierrez encouraging Thangkhal Bible Church believers, recently displaced by submersed lands due to new hydroelectric dam.



Land dedication for church building expansion for Zou Christian Bible Church.



First meeting of IFCA Fellowship of Fundamental Churches, in Raipur.



Teaching pastors at Center of Hope in Chhattisgarh.

Missionary Ministry of Prison Chaplaincy

— Chaplain Steve Francis —

This weekend I conducted services on three yards and toured another yard in order to make a proposal to the warden to resume services next Saturday and Sunday. Each of the three services included communion and two of them, baptisms. The young Jordanian man that came to Christ out of an Islam and Native American background was the first baptism on Saturday. He has come so far in such a short time. He played a major role in introducing is father to Christ two weeks ago and was a bit miffed that his dad was baptized before him last Sunday. His step-mother was angry at him for leading his father to Christ. Well, last week she trusted in Christ as well. A cousin has also trusted Christ, all of these out of Islam.

The last man who was baptized on that yard was Asian. On his chest was tattooed “Khymer” (Cambodia). When I asked him if he had trusted in Christ and Christ alone for his eternal salvation he gave a resounding, “Yes.” Today I spoke with him and asked about his former spiritual background. He responded, “Buddhist.”

At one time in my life I sought God's will concerning foreign missions. He did not open any doors for me to go. Now he has opened doors for me to send missionaries. These men have been convicted of felonies and many of them are on Green Cards. Many of them will be deported when their sentence has been served. What a privilege to disciple men who will one day be ministering in their

home country. Pray for them that they will grow while in prison and grow when they leave.

Let me share a very special blessing with you. If you know me personally you know that I love to laugh and love to make others laugh. What minister doesn't? Several weeks ago I invited several inmates who are out early on B yard to come in and pray with me and my yard pastor. I try to arrive at my office by eight or eight fifteen. The yard does not open for most of the men until 9. What a blessing as we pray for the ministry on the yard, the institution and for each other.

*Pray for them that
they will grow while
in prison and grow
when they leave.*

We missed praying on Wednesday because of too many distractions. On Thursday we did get together. As we began praying I had real compassion for the young black inmate who would pray after me. He has been here several years and has introduced me to his father in the visiting room and we have fellowshiped several times. Prior to coming to prison he and his father were not close, though both were believers. Since coming to prison he and his father have become good friends.

On that Thursday, earlier I was sitting in my office waiting for the men to come in. To hurry them along I called the yard observation tower officer and asked her to announce, “Call to prayer in the chapel.” Prior to making the call I had second thoughts about possibly offending some Muslims, but they know me and understand that I like to laugh. The men came quickly and they expressed their appreciation of the humor.

As we prayed, I prayed for this young man and his father. When it was his turn to pray he began to relate to the Lord how the previous week he had decided “to do harm” to a man on the yard who has been making life hard for him. Though not a shock to us, our hearts went out to him as a brother who is struggling with the pressures of living for Christ on a prison yard. After prayer he told us that he was not going to pray with us that day but he heard, “Call to prayer in the chapel” and said “it was as if the Lord was yanking at my heart.” He then thanked God for speaking to him through me. Needless to say we were both choking back tears at that point. You just never know how the Lord will use you. It was a blessing to have the words of attempted humor reach out and touch this young man who might have been hurt or even killed if he had not heard and responded to that. Thank you, Lord.

IFCA International Chaplain Steve Francis serves at Centinela (CA) State Prison.

Kindling Kindness

— Karen Frick —



“Random acts of kindness.” This is now a well-worn if not regularly practiced phrase embraced by both Christians and secularists. As our world moves rapidly towards the second coming of Christ, those of us who embrace the Scriptures see alarming signs manifesting themselves in our culture (2 Tim. 3:1-4).

The “kindness quotient” began declining years ago in our big cities. At times this lack of friendliness is witnessed in other locales. Our lights should shine brighter as the world becomes darker, leading me to muse that we Christians may want to spend a little extra time “kindling kindness” for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Living out kindness will draw others to the Savior and strengthen our Christian friends.

Perhaps the random acts of kindness admonition is in response to how quickly our society has become busy and self-absorbed. Observant, caring people desperately seek to use the equivalent of a dousing with “lighter fluid” to get the fire of kindness burning hot again. But kindling is more deliberate, more purposeful.

Gathering kindling to start a fire takes a little extra time, moving away from the beaten path, searching for

the “fatwood”, as it’s called in parts of the South. Fatwood are pieces of wood obtained from the resin-rich stumps of longleaf pines, requiring only a couple pieces to ignite a fire. Kind words and actions are resiniferous to the fire of Christ’s love in the body of believers.

Take a moment to reflect on the most meaningful displays of kindness recognizing someone who went out of their way to show encouragement, understanding, consideration, sympathy or love. As Christians don’t these deliberate acts of kindness remind you of our loving Savior? Our purpose in life is to reach others with the Gospel. As believers, we are instructed to “be kindly affectionate (devoted) to one another” (Rom. 12:10). It takes time to exhibit the attributes of sincere kindness. Consideration adds richness to another’s life by showing regard for their needs and feelings. Unfortunately many Christians get caught up in busily attempting to win the lost to the exclusion of “putting on kindness towards the brethren” (Col. 3:12). Saved and unsaved alike will recognize the consistency of our kindling with kindness versus a quick momentary flash from fabricated lighter fluid.

Heb. 10:24, 25 says, “Let us consider how we may spur (kindle) one another on toward love and good deeds (kindness)....encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Genuine kindness must first be lived out at home with the basics of patience, consideration, respect and warm-heartedness.

The “glow” should then radiate from our immediate family to others. Fatwood used to ignite incorporates the practical: an encouraging note or e-mail, providing needed transportation, sharing a meal, a small meaningful gift or help with a chore. Kindling is availability. How unique, in a self-centered society, for us to ask questions and then REALLY listen, exhibiting sincere interest in another’s joy or sorrow, failure or success! Caring enough to make time to practice kindness can mend relationships, thus strengthening the body of Christ.

It’s often said, “People, won’t care how much we know until they know how much we care.” Kindness may rekindle a fire for Christ that was smoldering under the weight of life’s everyday problems and disappointments in both others and yourself!

*Touched by a loving heart,
Wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken,
Will vibrate once more.*

—Fanny Crosby

Karen Frick served with her husband, Paul, on the mission field in Mexico for four years, returning to the youth pastorate work for many years. Paul has served as the Associate Pastor at Southwest Community Church, Miami, Florida, for the past 17 years where Karen is active in the ladies’ fellowship and weekly visitation.

IFCA International Annual 2008 Convention Registration

Hilton Eugene & Conference Center, Eugene, Oregon
June 20 - 24, 2008

Send form and your payment in full to IFCA, PO Box 810, Grandville, MI 49468-0810

Name _____
(LAST) (FIRST) (TITLE)

Name _____
(LAST) (FIRST) (TITLE)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

____ Please check if this is your first IFCA Convention that you have attended.

Child Registration Infant-age 12 (Children 13 and older should attend the IFCA Youth Convention or pay the adult registration fee.)

Name _____ Age _____ Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____ Name _____ Age _____

REGISTRATION & MEALS

Adult Registration Fees

Weekly Registration (5 days)

Number of Adults _____ x \$72 \$ _____
 (after May 23rd \$82)

OR

Daily Registration (per day per adult)

Number of Adults _____ x \$26 \$ _____

Child Registration

(infant - age 12) _____ x \$35 \$ _____
 (after May 23rd \$45)

Weekly Meal Tickets (includes Ladies Luncheon)

Guests staying in the hotel

Number of Adults _____ x \$92 \$ _____
 Children (ages 4-12) _____ x \$56 \$ _____

Guests not staying in the hotel

Number of Adults _____ x \$102 \$ _____
 Children (ages 4-12) _____ x \$66 \$ _____

Ladies Luncheon Ticket only _____ x \$18 \$ _____

Total Amount Due \$ _____

IMPORTANT NOTE

*You must contact the hotel to make room reservations for the convention. **This form is for IFCA Convention Registration and Meals only.** Thank you.*

2008 IFCA INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONVENTION INFORMATION

LOCATION

Hilton Eugene & Conference Center
66 East 6th Ave.
Eugene, OR 97401
Phone 1-800-445-8667 to make reservations,
request the IFCA INTERNATIONAL GROUP RATE.

HOTEL

The Hilton Eugene & Conference Center is prepared to meet all the room needs of individuals and families attending the 2008 IFCA Adult Convention. Each of their guest rooms is appointed with amenities for your comfort and convenience. Every room features a hair dryer, iron & ironing board, in room coffee maker, internet access and voice mail. Other hotel features pool and fitness room.

The room rate is \$79.00 single or double per night plus tax currently at 10.5%. This group rate will be available Wednesday, June 18, 2008 through Tuesday, June 24, 2008 based on availability. You can book your reservations online at www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/EUGEHF-IFCA-20080616/index.html For the Group/Convention code enter IFCA to get the \$79 rate. You can also call Hilton central reservations at 1-800-445-8667. If you are making reservations outside of the dates listed above, please call the Hilton Eugene directly at 1-800-937-6660 (M – F 7am to 4pm PST). You must request the IFCA INTERNATIONAL GROUP RATE. **The hotel is holding a block of rooms for our convention through, May 23, 2008.** After that cut-off date, the hotel will release the unreserved rooms for general sales. Plan to make reservations early to avoid the higher rates or the room block being full.

Check-in time is 3:00 pm and check-out time is noon.

MEALS

The package includes four dinners and three lunches inclusive. The Meal Plan begins with dinner on Friday, June 20, and ends with dinner, on Monday, June 23, 2008. No breakfast provided.

Pricing: Weekly Meal Ticket for those who are guests staying in the hotel, adults \$92.00 and children ages 4 - 12, \$56.00. Children 3 and under, may eat off their parents plate for free.

For those who are not guests staying in the Hilton Eugene & Conference Center, the weekly meal ticket is adult \$102.00 and children ages 4 - 12, \$66.00

WOMEN CONFERENCE

As you send in your registration, you will be mailed the details regarding the 2008 Women's IFCA Conference. If you are not going to pre-register, please email Miriam Lofquist (miriam@ifca.org) and she can email you the information prior to your arrival at the convention. If you are unable to attend the convention, please consider participating in our Special Project. Information about this Special Project can be obtained by contacting miriam@ifca.org or calling the Home Office at 616-531-1840.

CHILD CARE

A nursery program will be provided for Infant – 3 yrs of age. Don and Angela Stephens will be overseeing both nursery and children's ministry. For those 4 – 12 yrs of age, Child Evangelism will present one lesson each day and Don will have other activities for the children. They also plan to have two church vans for possible field trips with the children during the convention. Parents are urged to pre-register children on the form found in this VOICE magazine so sufficient materials and personnel can be available for Child Care. If you are not able to pre-register, please contact the IFCA Home Office (616-531-1840) and give us a count of the number of children you will be bringing to the convention.

YOUTH CONVENTION

The IFCA Youth Convention will be held at George Fox University. Please visit the IFCA Youth Convention website at www.ifcayouth.com for additional information and registration form.

TRANSPORTATION

The Hilton Eugene provides complimentary shuttle service to and from the Eugene airport. Just call from the concierge phone after you pick up your luggage. It will take 15 minutes for them to get to the airport.

PARKING

Complimentary on-site parking

POLICY ON FACILITY USE

Use of facilities does not imply endorsement of the doctrines or associations of an organization.