

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

Number 352 © 2019 The Trinity Foundation Post Office Box 68, Unicoi, Tennessee 37692 April, May 2019
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“If You Can’t Beat ‘Em, Join ‘Em”: The Jesuits and the United Bible Societies

By Charles Scott-Pearson

Editor’s Note: The following is taken from The Reformer – a publication of the Protestant Alliance of Great Britain. Thanks to Charles Scott-Pearson, Organizing Secretary of the Alliance for permission to reprint.

In 2011, during commemorations of the 400th anniversary of the publication of the *Authorized Version* of the Bible, the Vatican Embassy in Washington D.C. stated that the Church of Rome had greatly contributed to its production as it was based on earlier translation work made by a “Roman Catholic priest,” William Tyndale. Most readers, acquainted with Reformation history and the origin of the English Bible, will view this claim with abject incredulity. However, there is a sad truth about many people today who claim to be Christians: they have very little knowledge of the Scriptures and know very little of the history of the Church.

The Church of Rome has been and is constantly active in revising and rewriting history as well as in undermining the positions of Bible believers with their cunning reasoning. One of the claims which is often used by Roman Catholic apologists, particularly when they are unable to cope with the Bible disproving the teachings of their church, is that the Roman Catholic Church gave the Bible to the world.

Before the Second Vatican Council, the Church of Rome was very much against the translation of the Bible in the vernacular and its distribution among the people. In AD 666 Latin became the official language of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. The Latin Bible, the Vulgate translated by Jerome in the 4th century, became the official version to be used in churches.

To prevent normal people owning or reading the Bible, either in Latin or in any other language, the Council of Toulouse in 1229 decreed the following: “We prohibit also that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the Old and the New Testament; unless anyone from the motives of devotion should wish to have the Psalter or the Breviary [the Roman Catholic liturgy] for divine offices or the hours of the blessed Virgin; but we most strictly forbid their having any translation of these books.” The Reformation gave impetus to the translation of the Bible into the vernacular of many of the European nations.

The Vatican Off Balance

The work of Bible Societies throughout the 19th Century and early 20th Century, combined with the zeal of many missionaries, alarmed the Roman Catholic Church. Bibles became available in large quantities in French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese and were being given to people who were under Rome's darkness. Large numbers of

conversions followed, and the Church of Rome was forced to respond.

In 1824, Pope Leo XII in his Encyclical Letter *Ubi Primum* addressed the bishops with these words: “You have noticed a society, commonly called the Bible society [British and Foreign Bible Society, founded 1804], boldly spreading throughout the whole world. Rejecting the traditions of the holy Fathers and infringing the well-known decree of the Council of Trent, it works by every means to have the holy Bible translated, or rather mistranslated, into the ordinary languages of every nation. There are good reasons for fear that (as has already happened in some of their commentaries and in other respects by a distorted interpretation of Christ’s gospel) they will produce a gospel of men, or what is worse, a gospel of the devil!”¹

Twenty-two years later, Pope Pius IX, in his Encyclical *Qui Plurimus*, attacked the work of Bible societies with these words: “These crafty Bible societies, which renew the ancient guile of heretics, cease not to thrust their Bibles upon all men, even the unlearned – their Bibles, which have been translated against the laws of the church, and often contain false explanations of the text. Thus, the divine traditions, the teaching of the Fathers, and the authority of the [Roman] Catholic Church are rejected, and everyone in his own way interprets the words of the Lord, and distorts their meaning, thereby falling into miserable errors.”²

The temporal power of Rome was lost in 1870 when the Italian troops invaded the Papal States and conquered Rome, making her the capital of the newly born Kingdom of Italy. The wide circulation of Scriptures in the vernacular in predominantly Roman Catholic nations had begun to undermine the “spiritual power” and the unquestioned religious supremacy enjoyed by the Papacy.

The unstoppable force of the Word of God increased after World War Two. The defeat of Fascist Italy and other Axis powers further

undermined the work of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly in southern Europe. The victory of the Allied forces was followed, in the aftermath of the war, by the arrival of Protestant missionaries from the United Kingdom, the United States and other Protestant countries. The circulation of Bibles increased alarmingly [in the Vatican’s view] and the Church of Rome needed to deal with the increase of Protestants in Europe and Latin America, its heartlands.

Pope John XXIII, alarmed not only by the increase of Communism in the Roman Catholic world, but also by the growing presence of Protestants in those countries which were traditionally considered Roman Catholic, convened the Second Vatican Council in 1963. It became necessary that the issue of the Bible and its circulation should be urgently addressed, since there was no longer a political regime which it was able to force to carry out the bidding of the Vatican and enforce its cruel and oppressive persecutions. So, the policy of the Vatican started to follow [American war correspondent] Quentin Reynolds’ proverb: “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em.”

Pope Paul VI, successor of John XXIII who died during the Council, promulgated on November 18, 1965 a very important document, *Dei Verbum* – The Word of God.³ A leading figure in the preparation of this document was Basil Christopher Butler, an English convert from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism, an Oxford graduate and Abbot-President of the English Benedictine Order. He has been defined by many Roman Catholic scholars as “one of the two dozen who made the Council.”

Editor’s Note: This is where the May Review begins.

Rome’s False Definition of “The Word of God”

Dei Verbum sets out how the Roman Catholic Church sees Scripture and its own tradition. This document states: “Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God, committed to the Church. Holding fast to this

¹ *Ubi Primum, On His Assuming the Pontificate*, Pope Leo XII, 1824, as viewed at <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo12/112ubipr.htm>.

² *Qui Pluribus, On Faith and Religion*, Pope Pius IX, 1846, as viewed at <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9quiplu.htm>.

³http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html.

deposit the entire holy people united with their shepherds remain always steadfast in the teaching of the Apostles, in the common life, in the breaking of the bread and in prayers, so that holding to, practicing and professing the heritage of the faith, it becomes on the part of the bishops and faithful a single common effort.”

The Word of God, in the Roman Catholic Church, is not just the Protestant Canon of Scripture, but the 66 Books of the Bible plus the Apocrypha, and the Tradition of the Church. Roman Catholic apologists give the following definition of Tradition: “Sacred according to Rome, their tradition includes ‘transmitted revelation,’ that part of God’s revealed word which is not contained in Sacred Scripture.” Referring specifically to how Christian tradition was handed on, the Second Vatican Council says: “It was done by the apostles who handed on, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, what they themselves had received whether from the lips of Christ, from His way of life and His works, or whether they had learned it by the prompting of the Holy Spirit” (*Dei Verbum*).

Rome Begins Undermining “Protestant” Bible Societies, Dialogues with Cults

Following the Second Vatican Council, the Church of Rome has become actively involved with the work of Bible Societies. In 1969, Pope Paul VI, encouraged the formation of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate, known since 1990 as the Catholic Biblical Federation. The aim of this federation is not simply to provide translations of the Bible in various languages. From their official website we can read: “The primary task of the Catholic Biblical Federation resides in the effort to translate the biblical message into the personal and communal context of human beings’ lives. It thereby promotes a way of reading Sacred Scriptures which uncovers the life-giving message of God’s Word, thus countering the danger of a fundamentalist misinterpretation.”

This organization also supports “inter-confessional dialogue based on the common heritage of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, and also

the dialogue between the religions based on Sacred Scripture and those scriptures considered as sacred by other religions.” A quick glance through their website quickly reveals how actively they are involved in co-operating with and influencing the work of Bible translations in an “ecumenical” way as well as providing Bible study materials produced according to the dictates of *Dei Verbum*.

The co-operation of Liberal Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars in the field of Bible translation and related material has helped bolster the dishonest claim that the Roman Catholic Church has given us the Bible.

The acceptance of such a claim by many ignorant Evangelicals and Protestants has led to the acceptance of the Church of Rome as “another Christian denomination.” The walls separating the errors of Rome from the truth of the Scriptures have been pulled down to let a dangerous Trojan horse enter many Christian circles and lead them into apostasy and compromise. It has also pigeon-holed Bible believing Christians in a fundamentalist mold, aptly shaped by Jesuit craftiness, so that the authorities will compare them with Islamic extremism, thus discrediting their image, undermining their credibility, weakening their testimony, and encouraging the potential curtailing of their liberties. Further co-operation with this ecumenical body leads inevitably to co-operation with other non-Christian religions such as Islam.

It also opens a dialogue with cults such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Mormons. After all the Vatican, the Watchtower and the Mormons have a common ground: The Bible plus Tradition, plus the Governing Body, meaning that the laity cannot interpret Scripture for themselves.

Rome’s Lie About Tyndale

Did William Tyndale contribute to the translation of the work of the Bible in English? Yes. As a Roman Catholic priest? No. At his trial, William Tyndale was degraded from the priesthood⁴ by the Roman

⁴ According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, degradation from the priesthood is “A canonical penalty by which an ecclesiastic is entirely and perpetually deprived of all office, benefice, dignity, and power conferred on him by ordination; and by a special ceremony is reduced to the state of a layman,

Catholic Church for “heresy”; that heresy was translating the Bible into the English vernacular. By degrading him the religious authorities deprived him perpetually of all office, benefice, dignity, and power conferred to him at his ordination. He was reduced to the state of a layman. He was no longer a priest and he could not claim to be one or be thought of as one.

His final words were: “Lord! Open the king of England’s eyes.” The Apostle Paul was sent to preach the Gospel by the Lord Jesus Christ, and told to “open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith” (*Acts 26:18*).

Whilst the Roman Catholic Church did not alter any of its doctrines in the Second Vatican Council, it did radically alter its attitudes and approaches to the post World War Two world. The social upheaval caused by changing political boundaries in Europe, the rise of Communism, the spread of Protestantism and other religions meant that things had to be approached very differently. The result was the birth of the Ecumenical Movement and the Inter-Faith Movement.

The Critical Role of Augustine Bea

One of the main architects of the Second Vatican Council was the Jesuit, Cardinal Augustine Bea. A German scholar and author of more than 430 articles and 8 books, Bea was the main contributor to twelve of the fourteen documents issued by the Council. He had also been the adviser in the preparation of the *Declaration of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, issued as an infallible dogma in 1950.⁵ Augustine Bea was also, until his death in 1968, the President of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity which issued the notable

losing the privileges of the clerical state and being given over to the secular arm... Solemn degradation owes its origin to the military practice of thus expelling soldiers from the army; the Church adopted this institution in order to remove grievously delinquent clerics from the ecclesiastical order.” See <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04677c.htm>.

⁵ The so-called Assumption of Mary is the false doctrine that Mary, like Jesus, was sinless and that her allegedly incorrupt body was elevated to Heaven at her death.

decree *Unitatis redintegratio* (Restoring Unity) on Ecumenism in which Protestants were no longer described as “heretics,” but condescendingly classed as “separated brethren.”

Augustine Bea was also an excellent scholar in biblical languages and had been appointed as Rector of the Biblical Institute in Rome where he taught for over twenty years. He had also been instrumental, in the midst of the Second World War, to establish connections between Rome and German liberal Protestant scholars, particularly those involved in Bible translations.

The Birth of the United Bible Societies

In the aftermath of the Second World War it was felt that some substantial changes needed to be made to the Bible societies in Europe. Consequently, in 1946 a number were merged into one main body so that resources and funds could be pooled, and this single organization is called the United Bible Societies (UBS). To date it has incorporated 140 different Bible societies involved in many translating projects around the world.

In the years preceding the Second Vatican Council, a dialogue was begun between the UBS and the Church of Rome. It was believed that co-operation in Bible translation between Roman Catholics and Protestants would in time lessen the differences and help the Church of Rome change its teachings. This was surely due to the fact that liberal Protestants had been deceived in believing that Rome had changed.

To achieve this kind of co-operation the UBS replaced the conservative elements among their leadership with more moderate men who could welcome Roman Catholic scholars in their midst.

The most suitable Roman Catholic scholar at the time was Cardinal Augustine Bea who, before his death, agreed with the U.B.S. and published a document entitled *Guiding Principles for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible* (1968).⁶

It is interesting to notice the agreed guiding principles stating that the Working Committee

⁶ See http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/general-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19871116_guidelines-bible_en.html.

should be made of four or six scholars equally divided between Protestant and Roman Catholic constituencies and possessing four essential characteristics: equal standing, complementary abilities, mutual respect, and capacity to work together.

The Texts the UBS Promotes – And the One It Suppresses

The UBS are the main promoter of the Kurt Aland Greek New Testament (also known as the Nestle New Testament) upon which most modern versions of the Bible are based. This Greek New Testament is a compilation of various old manuscripts and fragments. It incorporates the *Codex Vaticanus*, the *Codex Alexandrinus*, the *Codex Sinaiticus*, and it also takes into account ancient copies of the New Testament in Latin (including the Latin *Vulgate*) and ancient Syriac. It should be noted that it does not incorporate the *Textus Receptus*, the New Testament manuscript upon which all of the Protestant Reformers based their translations including the *Authorized Version*.

The editorial committee of the UBS is also responsible for the classification of the various manuscripts, fragments, and texts used in the compilation of the Greek New Testament to be used by translators. They classified the texts in four categories marked with the letters of the alphabet: A indicating that the text is virtually certain, B that there is some degree of doubt, C that there is a considerable degree of doubt and, D that there is a very high degree of doubt.

Among the UBS Leaders, A Man Who Was Almost Elected Pope

Following the death of Cardinal Bea in 1968, the UBS extended the invitation to join their editorial committee to another equally able Jesuit scholar, Carlo Maria Martini, who later on would be elevated to the rank of Cardinal.

In 1975, the 3rd edition of the Greek New Testament published by UBS listed as editors Kurt Aland,⁷ Matthew Black,⁸ Carlo Maria

Martini,⁹ Bruce Metzger,¹⁰ and Allen Wikgren.¹¹ It was during the latter seventies that several inter-confessional projects of the New Testament were started in some countries under the auspices of the UBS. The revision of this Greek New Testament, currently in its 5th edition, is used by most Bible Societies and other Bible translating agencies.

The Vatican, having gained its foothold within the biggest “Protestant” Bible Society of the world, was not slow in beginning its policy of infiltration and control. After all, the Roman Catholic scholars

inspiration of Scripture by the Holy Spirit and denied that the four Gospels and several other New Testament books were written by the men for whom they are named. For a more detailed discussion of Aland’s unbelief, see *What Today’s Christian Needs to Know About Dr. Kurt Aland, Textual Critic*, published by the Trinitarian Bible Society, 2007.

⁸ Matthew Black (1908-1994) was a minister of the liberal Church of Scotland and a professor of Biblical criticism at two major Scottish universities. He was the first editor of *New Testament Studies*, an academic journal published by Cambridge University that promotes views of the text of Scripture that deny verbal plenary inspiration by the Holy Spirit.

⁹ Carlo Maria Martini (1927-2012) was a Jesuit, a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, and in 2005 was nearly elected pope. Considered a towering intellectual figure within the church, Martini was also considered a social liberal. After the death of Pope John Paul II, Martini was nearly elected as his successor. According to several reports he received the largest number of votes on the first ballot of the conclave to elect the next pope but fell short of a clear majority. In a later round of voting, Cardinal Josef Ratzinger obtained a majority and became Benedict XVI.

¹⁰ Bruce Metzger (1914-2007) was a minister of the liberal mainline Presbyterian church, and took a naturalistic view of the text of Scripture. He was a contributor to the *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible and chaired the translation committee for the *New Revised Standard Version* from 1977 to 1990. According to a biography published by the Society of Biblical Literature, Metzger “took great satisfaction in the expansion of the *NRSV* to include all the texts viewed as canonical by Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Protestant Christians, and was pleased to present copies of it to both Pope John Paul II and His All Holiness Demetrios [prelate of the Greek Orthodox Church].”

¹¹ Allen Wikgren (1906-1998) was an ordained minister of the liberal Northern Baptist Convention and New Testament scholar at the University of Chicago Divinity School. He was a member of the committee that produced the *Revised Standard Version*, focusing on the translation of the deuterocanonical books – the Roman Catholic and Orthodox additions to the authentic canon of Scripture.

⁷ Dr. Kurt Aland (1915-1994) was an unbelieving linguistic scholar who looked upon the Bible as an essentially human book. Among other things, he denied the verbal plenary

working with the UBS came from the religious order founded to destroy Protestantism: The Society of Jesus, more commonly known as the Jesuits. A slogan began to circulate in the circle of the UBS – “The work is one, let the money be one” – with the result that Roman Catholic Bible translation projects were to be financed by Protestant churches!

A revision of the *Guiding Principles for Interconfessional Co-operation in Translating the Bible* was issued in 1987 under the guidance of the Jesuit Cardinal Johannes Willebrands¹² and approved by the then Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Donald Coggan,¹³ honorary president of the UBS. This document had some subtle, interesting changes regarding the translating team: “Consisting of not more than six persons of high competence from the Roman Catholic and other Christian constituencies and possessing four essential characteristics: a) comparable qualifications, b) complementary abilities, c) mutual respect, and d) capacity to work together.”

There is no longer an equal proportion between Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars, actually the word “Protestant” has been removed. Protestants are referred to as being of “other Christian constituencies.” A very high competence in Biblical languages is required to be part of this translating team which without the clause of being equal in proportion could have a majority of Roman Catholic scholars and a minority of other Christian scholars. It should be noted that there has never

been anyone on this team that is not from a traditionally Protestant denomination.

The Roman Catholic Church has been very busy for decades in preparing excellent scholars in Biblical languages. They have trained them to become the most able scholars in the field. This is in order that they will dominate the committees tasked with publishing future editions of the Greek New Testament which will be used by Bible Societies and other Bible translating agencies, such as Wycliffe Bible Translators.¹⁴

Where Are These Roman Catholic Brilliant Scholars Trained?

The Pontifical Biblical Institute of Rome was founded by Pope Pius X in 1909 to counteract the work of Bible societies by training scholars to study and interpret the Scriptures in order to promote the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. The Institute was run by the Jesuits since its birth, and it has also a branch in Jerusalem. It runs courses on Biblical languages and conferences for future Bible translators.

The Roman Catholic Church, having not been successful in the suppression of Bible societies and their work, has patiently and methodically worked to gain control and influence on them. The 1987 *Guiding Principles* imposed on the inter-confessional translation projects dictate that the scholars involved should have a common way of interpreting the Scriptures based on the use of “mutually acceptable commentaries and scholarly works.”

This means that commentaries and scholarly work of Protestant persuasion cannot be ever used if in their exposition of the Scriptures they undermine the primacy of Peter, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the worship of Mary, salvation by works, and the doctrine of purgatory.

These *Guiding Principles* also impose the use, where it is necessary, of “alternative readings, being texts, which represents a significant possibility of

¹² Johannes Willebrands (1909-2006) was a Dutch cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church and president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity during the crucial period from 1969 to 1989. Willebrands was considered a strong candidate for the papacy at both papal elections in 1978 (after the deaths of Paul VI in August and John Paul I in October). He reportedly withdrew his candidacy at the October conclave to clear the way for Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyła to be elected as John Paul II.

¹³ Donald Coggan (1909-2000) was the 101st Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the worldwide Anglican Communion. During his prelacy he advocated the ordination of women and sought inter-communion and eventual re-union with both the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches. Coggan attended the 1978 enthronement of John Paul II, the first Archbishop of Canterbury to attend such a ceremony since before the Reformation.

¹⁴ The co-opting of Wycliffe Bible Translators is already quite evident in its obsession with so-called “cultural contextualization” – a strategy involving radical mis-translations of Scripture that very much follows the Jesuit maxim that “the ends justify the means.”

being original or which reflect a long tradition in existing translation.” This means in practice that, in order to give “biblical authority” to the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church a weaker manuscript [*i.e.*, the Critical Text] should be used instead of the ones which clearly contradict Rome’s heretical claims [the Received Text].

The Reformers studied Greek and Hebrew to be able to better understand the Scriptures and translated them into the vernacular. The Reformation gave great impetus to the study of Biblical languages and it is sad to notice that today, in spite of the great availability of material and modern technology, few Bible believers are studying these languages. This lack of knowledge and understanding are urgently needed to counteract the manipulation of Scriptures by the Church of Rome, apostate Protestants, and misguided Evangelicals working together.

Satan’s approach to challenge God’s sovereignty has always been, is now, and shall be to the end of time, “Yea, hath God said?” (*Genesis* 3:1). He managed to largely withhold the Scriptures from us during the Dark Ages and is rapidly leading us into another age of spiritual ignorance and superstitious fear. We need Almighty God to appear in reviving power on His Church and awakening power in the nations.

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