

# 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.

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## Healing the Mortal Wound

John W. Robbins

Several years ago, about the time Charles Colson, Chairman of Prison Fellowship, and Richard John Neuhaus, President of the Institute on Religion and Public Life, quietly began their movement to overthrow the Reformation, *The Trinity Review* published an analysis of Colson's theology titled "The Counterfeit Gospel of Charles Colson" (January and February 1994). The ersatz-evangelicals were stung by our criticism of their celebrated leader, whom they had nicknamed "the thinking man's Billy Graham," and they reacted maliciously.

The 1994 essay was not the first time *The Trinity Review* had criticized Charles Colson's false gospel and in turn been attacked by the ersatz-evangelicals for doing so: In 1985 *The Trinity Review* had published a long and (now it seems) overly polite letter that Dr. Robbins had written to Colson about his theological errors, a letter that Colson did not deign to acknowledge. At the time, Dr. Robbins was teaching at Chesapeake Theological Seminary in the Washington, D. C., area, but after that letter was published, the Seminary vice president, in an unusual act of kindness, invited Dr. Robbins out for pizza, and there at the Pizza Hut in suburban Maryland, told him to stop criticizing Colson or he would no longer be teaching at the Seminary. The vice president, like so many seminary officials, was not interested in truth or theology; he was interested in prestige and money, and Charles Colson represented both. Of course, Chesapeake Seminary executed his threat, and Dr. Robbins was never

invited back to teach. In 1994, Dr. Robbins' essay on Colson's errant theology would cost him a teaching position at The King's College in New York. In 1996, Bill Bright had his lawyers write letters to The Trinity Foundation, threatening litigation for mentioning on the cover of *Justification by Faith Alone* that Bright was a signer of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." We can only conclude that the ersatz-evangelicals, who are continually enthusing about love, love all things—except the truth, and all men—except those who speak it.

### *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*

In 1992 or 1993, Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus organized a joint project of the organizations they had founded, Prison Fellowship (founded in 1976, it had a budget of \$38 million in 1997) and the Institute on Religion and Public Life (founded in 1989, it had a budget of \$1.6 million in 1996). This "joint project" (the words are Neuhaus') invited both Roman Catholic and Evangelical theologians to participate in drafting a document published on March 29, 1994, under the title "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" was an attack on the importance of Christian theology in general and the doctrine of justification by faith alone in particular, in favor of creating a united religious front for political and social action against

secular humanism. The Colson-Neuhaus attack on doctrine and justification was so obvious that many leading churchmen—such as D. James Kennedy, John MacArthur, and R. C. Sproul—rejected it openly. The Trinity Foundation's response to "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" was to publish two books on justification: Charles Hodge's *Justification by Faith Alone* and Horatius Bonar's *The Everlasting Righteousness*.

Despite criticism from leaders such as Kennedy, Sproul, and MacArthur, the Colson-Neuhaus Group did not dissolve; instead, they renewed their efforts, meeting twice a year, burning up the fax and telephone lines between meetings, and continued to work quietly until November 1997. On November 12, they released a new document called "The Gift of Salvation." This document, unlike "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," is entirely theological in content; it is not characterized by expressions of concern about social and political action; it is designed, not to effect a political alliance, but to create a theological, and eventually an ecclesiastical, union.

"The Gift of Salvation," according to one of its signers, Timothy George, Dean of Beeson Divinity School, "is being translated into various languages and will be distributed to pastors and church leaders around the world." In addition, "A volume of essays and papers presented at these meetings will be published in the near future." George reports that "The Gift of Salvation" is intended as a response to criticism that the 1994 manifesto slighted justification and missions (*Christianity Today*, December 8, 1997).

With "The Gift of Salvation," the active involvement, support, and guidance by the Vatican are obvious, though they have not been widely reported by the press. In a telephone interview on January 14, 1998, Mr. Neuhaus (disobeying Christ, he calls himself "Father Neuhaus") confirmed that Roman Catholic bishops had indeed attended and been involved in meetings of the Colson-Neuhaus Group, and that Cardinal Edward Cassidy had attended at least two Group meetings in 1996 and 1997, including speaking at the meeting on October 6-7 in New York City at which the latest manifesto,

"The Gift of Salvation," was adopted. The substance of the Cardinal's remarks was reprinted in the January 1998 issue of *First Things*, a journal edited by Neuhaus. In addition to Cardinal Cassidy, Dean George reported in a telephone conversation with this writer on January 22 that Archbishop Francis George of Chicago (no relation to Dean Timothy George, except, he said, as "brothers in Christ") and Cardinal John O'Connor of New York have been active participants in the Colson-Neuhaus Group. Archbishop George was recently named a Cardinal by the reigning monarch of the Roman State-Church, Karol Wojtyla, dba John Paul II. "The Gift of Salvation," published also in the January 1998 issue of *First Things*, was introduced by this statement: "The convenors [sic] and participants [in the Colson-Neuhaus Group] express their gratitude to Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, for his very active support throughout this process." Who are Francis George, John J. O'Connor, and Edward Idris Cassidy?

### *Francis George*

Named a cardinal in the Roman State-Church by Karol Wojtyla on January 18, 1998, Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago, has been a participant in the Colson-Neuhaus Group's discussions for at least two years. Born January 18, 1937, George entered the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1957, was ordained a priest in 1963, and ordained a bishop in 1990. He has been Archbishop of Chicago for less than a year, being installed in May 1997. His first stint as archbishop was in Portland, Oregon, beginning in May 1996.

Educated at the University of Ottawa, the Catholic University of America, Tulane University, and the Pontifical University Urbaniana in Rome, George holds five degrees. Much of his life has been spent in academia, having taught at five colleges and authored a score of articles, reviews and one book. His time, however, has been largely occupied with administrative duties: George currently holds positions in more than twenty Roman organizations, committees, and conferences, including that of trustee of the Papal Foundation.

## *John J. O'Connor*

John J. O'Connor was born in Philadelphia, January 15, 1920, educated in the public and parochial grade and high schools in Philadelphia, attended St. Charles Borromeo Seminary and five colleges and universities. He received an M. A. in "Advanced Ethics" from Villanova, an M. A. in Clinical Psychology from Catholic University, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Georgetown University. O'Connor was ordained a priest in Philadelphia in 1945. For 27 years he served as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, and was Chief of Chaplains from 1975 to 1979. He retired from the Navy in 1979 with the rank of Rear Admiral. Later that year he was ordained a bishop by Karol Wojtyla in Rome. He was appointed archbishop of New York in 1984, and made a cardinal in 1985.

Cardinal O'Connor is a member of several departments of the Vatican government, including the Congregation of Bishops, the Congregation for Vatican Finance, the Council for Public Affairs of the Church, and the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications. He is also chairman of the Committee on Social Development and World Peace, a member of the Pro-Life Committee, and a member of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference Administrative Board. He is on the advisory board of the Georgetown (University) Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, the Knights of Malta, and the Knights of Columbus.

## *Edward Cassidy*

By far the most interesting, most powerful, and most important of the Roman officials participating in the Colson-Neuhaus Group is Edward Cassidy. Despite his name, he is not an American Cardinal, as one might assume. His *curriculum vitae*, provided to *The Trinity Review* by his office in the Vatican, reports that the Cardinal

was born in Sydney, Australia, July 5, 1924;

was educated at Parramatta High School in Sydney;

was an employee of the Ministry of Road Transport for the government of New South Wales for three years after high school;

entered St. Columbia's Seminary in Springwood in 1943;

was promoted to St. Patrick's College in Manly in 1944; and

was ordained to the priesthood in St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, on July 23, 1949, at the age of 25.

But the future Cardinal's days in Australia were nearly over. From 1950 to 1952, Edward Idris Cassidy served as Assistant Priest in the parish of Yenda, diocese of Wagga Wagga—where he was later incardinated. In September 1952, the bishop of Wagga Wagga sent Cassidy to Rome to study canon law at the Lateran University, which awarded him a doctorate in Canon Law *summa cum laude* for his study of the political-ecclesiastical figure of the Apostolic Delegate. While at the Lateran University, Cassidy was also a student at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Piazza della Minerva, from which he received a diploma in diplomatic studies in 1955. He joined the diplomatic service of the papacy in the same year.

It is important for the reader to keep in mind that the Roman organization, though very religious, is not a church; it is and has always been a religio-political organization. Vatican City is an independent and sovereign nation, and the papacy both sends and receives ambassadors from most nations in the world, including the United States. For example, the Vatican maintains an embassy in Washington, D. C.; its telephone number is 202.333.7121. President Clinton recently appointed former U. S. Representative Mrs. Lindy Boggs, a devout Romanist, as U. S. Ambassador to the Vatican. (All this implies, of course, that all members of the Roman hierarchy are agents of a foreign power, but they are apparently exempt from registering as such.) Furthermore, the papacy has maintained for at least a thousand years that it is the rightful sovereign of the world, and that all

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people—citizens and rulers alike—owe it unquestioning allegiance.

As an ambassador for the pope, Cassidy was first sent to India (1955-1962), followed by five years in Dublin (1962-1967), two years in El Salvador (1967-1969) and a year in Argentina (1969-1970). On October 27, 1970, Paul VI, the reigning monarch of the Roman government, appointed Cassidy Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the Republic of China, conferring on him the Titular See of Amantia and making him an archbishop. Cassidy was episcopally ordained in Rome on November 15, 1970, and left for Taiwan shortly thereafter.

Since being ordained a Roman priest in 1949, Cassidy's career has included the following:

assistant priest, parish of Yenda, diocese of Wagga Wagga, Australia, 1950-1952;

student at the Lateran University, Rome, 1952-1955;

student at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Piazza della Minerva, 1953-1955;

Doctor of Canon Law, *summa cum laude*, Lateran University, 1955;

Diplomate in Diplomatic Studies, Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, 1955;

appointed to the diplomatic service of the papacy, 1955;

posted to the Apostolic Internunciature in India, 1955-1962;

posted to Apostolic Nunciature in Dublin, Ireland, 1962-1967;

posted to El Salvador, 1967-1969;

posted to Argentina, 1969-1970;

posted to the Republic of China (Taiwan), 1970-1979;

ordained archbishop, 1970;

first Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Bangladesh, 1972-1979;

Apostolic Delegate to Burma, 1972-1979;

Apostolic Delegate to Southern Africa, 1979-84;

Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to Lesotho, 1979-1984;

Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to The Netherlands, 1984-1988;

Substitute of the Secretariat of State (appointed by the reigning monarch of Rome, Karol Wojtyla), 1988-;

President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (appointed by Wojtyla), 1989-;

President of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, 1989.

In 1991, Karol Wojtyla made ("created" is the word the Vatican uses) Cassidy Cardinal Deacon of Santa Maria in Via Lata, and soon thereafter appointed him a member of the following Vatican divisions and departments, positions that he still holds:

the Council of the Secretariat of State's Second Section;

the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith;

the Congregation for the Bishops;

the Congregation for the Oriental Churches;

the Congregation for the Evangelisation of the Peoples;

the Congregation for Divine Worship;

the Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments;

the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue;

the Pontifical Council *Cor Unum*;

the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See;

the Pontifical Commission for Latin America.

In 1994, Karol Wojtyla appointed Cardinal Cassidy a member of the President's Council of the newly formed Central Committee for the Jubilee Year 2000. In March 1995 Cardinal Cassidy was named a member of the General Secretariat's Council for the Special Assembly of the Bishops' Synod for Lebanon. In June 1996, Cassidy was named a member of the Pre-Synodal Council of the Synod of Bishops for the Special Assembly for Oceania.

Edward Idris Cassidy entered the diplomatic service—the intelligence service—of the papacy in 1955, at the age of 31. For 46 years he has been an ambassador of the papacy; he has occupied the highest offices of the Roman State-Church; and he has been a trusted international delegate of the pope. To say that Edward Cassidy is a powerful figure in the Vatican government is understatement. And because it is understatement, to suggest that Charles Colson and R. J. Neuhaus are the principals in Evangelicals and Catholics Together is ludicrous. When Cassidy and Neuhaus and Colson sit down at the table together, it is neither the ex-con nor the ex-Lutheran who calls the shots. According to Will Nance, Director of Wilberforce Communications at Prison Fellowship, Cardinal Cassidy has "reviewed all the work" of the Colson-Neuhaus Group and has "put his stamp of approval on the documents."

The January issue of *First Things* published the text of Cardinal Cassidy's remarks to the Colson-Neuhaus Group on October 7, 1997. For the Cardinal's lecture, the Roman bishops from Latin America, led by Archbishop Oscar Rodriguez, president of CELAM, the council of Latin American bishops conferences, joined the Colson-Neuhaus Group. Also present was Cardinal John O'Connor. The formal title of Cardinal Cassidy's lecture was "The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium"; its subtitle is "Evangelizing and Reevangelizing Latin America with—Not Against—One Another." One of the Cardinal's principal concerns in the lecture was to stop the loss of membership in the Roman State-Church in Latin America. That is also why "The Gift of Salvation" is being translated and distributed worldwide, as Timothy George reported in *Christianity Today*.

### *Charles Colson and R. J. Neuhaus*

Richard John Neuhaus is president of The Institute on Religion and Public Life, formerly known as the Rockford Institute Center on Religion and Society. Neuhaus led the Center in a noisy and acrimonious split from the Rockford Institute (Illinois) in 1989. The Institute on Religion describes itself as "a nonpartisan interreligious research and education institute in New York City." Neuhaus' *curriculum vita* describes him as "Father Neuhaus," "acclaimed as one of the foremost authorities on the role of religion in the contemporary world." Neuhaus is editor-in-chief of the Institute's publication, *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*. Neuhaus has written and edited many books, including *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, on the theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg (edited, 1969); *Movement and Revolution* (with Peter Berger, 1970); *In Defense of People* (1971); *Time Toward Home: The American Experiment as Revelation* (1975); *Against the World for the World* (edited, 1976); *Virtue, Public and Private* (edited); *Freedom for Ministry; Christian Faith and Public Policy* (1977); *To Empower People* (with Peter Berger, 1977); *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America; Unsecular America* (edited, 1986); *Dispensations* (1986); *Community, Confession and Conflict* (edited); *The Catholic Moment: The Paradox of the Church in the Postmodern World* (1987); *Jews in Unsecular America* (edited); *Democracy and the Renewal of Education* (edited); *Bible, Politics and Democracy* (edited); *Believing Today: Jew and Christian in Conversation* (with Rabbi Leon Klenicki); *America Against Itself* (1992); *Doing Well and Doing Good: The Moral Challenge of the Free Economy* (1992); *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission* (co-edited with Charles Colson, 1995); *The End of Democracy* (1997).

Neuhaus was born in Canada to American parents, educated in Ontario, and graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, a Lutheran institution. According to his *c.v.* and book jackets, while a Lutheran minister Neuhaus played a leading role in organizations working for civil rights, peace, international justice, and religious ecumenism. That is, Neuhaus is a liberal-leftist. He has won the John Paul II Award for Religious Freedom, which must be like winning the William

Jefferson Clinton Award for Chastity and Honesty. Neuhaus has held presidential appointments in the Carter, Reagan, and Bush administrations. For some time, Neuhaus was a columnist for *National Review*, William F. Buckley's snooty journal of opinion.

In the 1980s, Neuhaus wrote that there were no longer any important theological differences between Lutherans and Roman Catholics, and predicted that by the end of the century, Lutherans would be reunited with Rome. On September 8, 1990, Neuhaus left the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and joined the Roman State-Church. In a memo to his friends he wrote:

"On Saturday, September 8, the Nativity of Mary, I was received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. In the months ahead I will be preparing to enter the priesthood of the Catholic Church. With the full support of my bishop, John Cardinal O'Connor, I will continue to serve as director of the Institute on Religion and Public Life and as a member of the Community of Christ. . . . Over the last twenty years and more, I have repeatedly and publicly urged that the separated ecclesial existence of Lutheranism, if it was once necessary, is no longer necessary; and, if no longer necessary, such separated existence is no longer justified. Therefore, cooperating with other evangelical catholics who shared my understanding of the Lutheran destiny and duty according to the Augsburg Confession, I devoted myself to the healing of the breach of the 16th century between Rome and the Reformation. This meant and means ecclesial reconciliation and the restoration of full communion with the Bishop of Rome and the churches in communion with the Bishop of Rome."

In September 1991, Neuhaus was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of New York. Shortly after becoming a Roman priest, Neuhaus began his collaboration with Charles Colson in Evangelicals and Catholics Together.

According to Neuhaus, the Vatican is giving "official support for an unofficial initiative [Evangelicals and Catholics Together, the Colson-Neuhaus Group]." Now such double-talk is typical of both Romanists and Communists; as George Orwell pointed out in "Politics and the English Language," double-talk is typical of all who wish to disguise their intentions or their actions. In this case, the double-talk indicates that Colson and his fellow ersatz-evangelicals are puppets of the Vatican. If one understands what role the ersatz-evangelicals are playing and what the political and ecclesiastical ambitions of the Vatican are, it is very clear what Colson and Neuhaus are doing. To put it bluntly, Colson and Neuhaus are the front men (the Romanists, as well as the Communists, are adept at using fronts) in an imperialist papal plan to regain control, first of the churches, and ultimately of the world. Anyone familiar with the bloody history of the papacy—a totalitarian politico-religious power that has been far more successful and survived far longer than the Communists or the Nazis—will know that the papacy has never relinquished its centuries-old claim to be Dominatrix of the world. Its religious liberalism since the Vatican II Council (1962-1965) has not diminished the papacy's religious and political ambitions; rather, as anyone familiar with the influence of liberalism in the so-called Protestant churches knows, it has enhanced them.

Richard John Neuhaus converted to Romanism in 1990. After all, why not do so, since the Roman State-Church is the logical end of the doctrinal and ecclesiastical trends in modern "Protestantism" in general, and modern Lutheranism in particular? The Roman State-Church, for example, has never wavered in its belief that Christ died for each and every man without exception; that is, the Roman State-Church has always been Arminian, even before there was an Arminius. Colson, being an Arminian Southern Baptist, has not yet rejoined Rome, but his wife is Roman, and one suspects that Colson himself has not actually joined the Roman State-Church only because he believes he can be more effective at repealing the Reformation if he remains a Southern Baptist for the time being.

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Of course, being a willing tool of powerful and sinister interests is not a novel experience for Charles Colson. He is one of the White House lawyers who worked for Richard Nixon in the early 1970s and went to prison for his loyal efforts. During that period Colson claims to have been converted by reading C. S. Lewis (Lewis' theology is a garbled mixture of some ideas from the Bible, more from the Anglo-Catholic Church, and many from pagans), and Colson was later tutored in theology by R. C. Sproul, among others. Clive Staples Lewis was a member of the apostate Church of England, an institution whose history is based largely on theological compromise with Rome (the Anglicans were the original middle-of-the-roaders, though if you say it in Latin, as they did, it sounds much more respectable: *via media*). And R. C. Sproul, regrettably, clings tenaciously to Aristotelian and Roman Catholic philosophy, while preaching the sovereignty of God, apparently believing that a mind divided against itself can too stand.

Like Neuhaus (see *The Catholic Moment*), Colson is enamored with religious paradox. The word *paradox*, of course, indicates the influence existentialism and dialectical theology have had on their thinking; their primary effect is to enable Colson and Neuhaus to accept contradictory ideas without quibble.

Colson, who is Southern Baptist and whose wife is Roman, has participated in Roman masses and praised Teresa of Calcutta as "the greatest saint in the world" and a "giant of the faith." His 1992 book, *The Body*, was praised by ersatz-evangelicals as well as Romanists: J. I. Packer (Anglican), Cardinal O'Connor (Romanist), Pat Robertson (Charismatic), Bill Hybels (entertainer), Steve Brown (radio star), Jerry Falwell (Baptist), James Montgomery Boice (Presbyterian), Jack Hayford (Charismatic), Carl F. H. Henry (former *Christianity Today* editor), Adrian Rogers (celebrity), Kenneth Kantzer (former *Christianity Today* editor), Richard John Neuhaus (Romanist), and Vernon Grounds (Baptist seminary president). In his list of "Recommended Reading" at the end of the book, Colson included volumes by Wolfhart Pannenberg, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Malcolm

Muggeridge, R. J. Neuhaus, Richard Niebuhr, Ern Baxter, Avery Dulles, S. J., Charles Finney, Keith Fournier, John Frame, John Paul II, Robert Webber, and Helmut Thelicke.

Colson favors making the sign of the cross; laments the lack of a Protestant Magisterium and a monolithic church structure; decries religious freedom; attacks individualism; endorses "Catholic evangelicals"; and praises the Roman State-Church for "calling heretics to account."

These two influential writers, Charles Colson and R. J. Neuhaus, together with their collaborators, the ersatz-evangelicals

Gerald Bray, Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama

Bill Bright, Founder and Chairman, Campus Crusade for Christ, California

Harold O. J. Brown, Professor, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois

William C. Frey, Bishop, Episcopal Church

Timothy George, Dean, Beeson Divinity School

Os Guinness, President, Trinity Forum, Arlington, Virginia

Kent R. Hill, President, Eastern Nazarene College, Massachusetts

Richard Land, Christian Life Commission, Southern Baptist Church (first signed, then withdrew his signature)

Max Lucado, author, head pastor, Oak Hills Church of Christ, San Antonio, Texas

T. M. Moore, Presbyterian Church in America; President, Chesapeake Theological Seminary, Baltimore-Washington, D.C.

Richard Mouw, President, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California

Mark Noll, Professor of History, Wheaton College, Illinois

Brian O'Connell, Interdev

Thomas Oden, President, Drew University, New Jersey

James I. Packer, Professor, Regent College, Vancouver, Canada

Timothy R. Phillips, Professor, Wheaton College

John Rogers, Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry

Robert A. Seiple, President, World Vision, Monrovia, California

John Woodbridge, Professor, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Illinois

and the Roman Catholics:

James J. Buckley, Professor, Loyola College, Maryland

J. A. Di Noia, O. P., Professor, Dominican House of Studies

Avery Dulles, S. J., Professor, Fordham University, New York

Thomas Guarino, Professor, Seton Hall University

Peter Kreeft, Professor, Boston College

Matthew L. Lamb, Professor, Boston College

Eugene LaVerdiere, S. S. S., Editor: *Emmanuel*

Francis Martin, member of the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family

Ralph Martin, President, Renewal Ministries

Michael Novak, Fellow, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D. C.

Edward Oakes, S. J., Professor, Regis University, Denver, Colorado

Thomas Rausch, S. J., Professor, Loyola Marymount University

George Weigel, President, Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, D. C.

Robert Louis Wilken, Professor, University of Virginia

issued a new manifesto on November 12, 1997, "The Gift of Salvation." Let us examine that document in some detail.

### *The Document: "The Gift of Salvation"*

The 1997 manifesto from the Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group begins by quoting *John* 3:16-17, a passage, it is safe to say, that no signatory understands, for they quote it to support their Arminian-Universalist view that Christ died for every man. They do not understand even the rudiments of the Gospel: Christ died for his people, his friends, his sheep, his church, his elect; and that Christ's death actually and completely achieved their salvation. Christ's death did not merely make salvation possible, as the ersatz-evangelicals teach; *Christ's death actually saved his people*. That is what the good news—the Gospel—is.

Then the Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group thanks God "that in recent years many Evangelicals and Catholics . . ." Now, deceptive use of language pervades this document, beginning with the first sentence. "Evangelical" was the name given to the early Reformers, because they advocated two doctrines: (1) justification by grace alone, through faith alone, on the basis of Christ's finished work alone (*sola gratia/sola fide/solo Christo*); and (2) the Bible alone is the Word of God (*sola Scriptura*). But our modern Protestant-impersonators do not believe either doctrine. Calling themselves Evangelicals, they accept other words as God's Word; they reject doctrinal and historical sections of the Bible as culturally conditioned, as poetry, and as historically and scientifically inaccurate; they do not even understand, let alone believe, the system of truth taught in the Bible; they add other revelations to the Bible; and they reject the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone. The Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group may speak with their lips some of the same words as the Reformers—Karl Barth and the neo-orthodox did that for decades—but their hearts are far from the Reformation, and they assign

new meanings to those words—in order to fool the elect, if possible. Second, "catholic" means universal. The Roman State-Church is not universal (though it intends to be), and its common name, "Roman Catholic Church," is a contradiction in terms, just as much as if someone were to speak of the Unicoi Universal Church. The true church is not Roman, and the Roman State-Church is neither catholic nor true.

The sentence continues: "We give thanks to God that in recent years many Evangelicals and Catholics, ourselves among them, have been able to express a common faith in Christ and so to acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters in Christ." These signers, then, despite whatever differences they may have over secondary issues—which they themselves list as

the meaning of baptismal regeneration;

the Eucharist and sacramental grace;

the historic uses of the language of justification as it relates to imputed and transformative righteousness;

the normative status of justification in relation to all Christian doctrine; the assertion that while justification is by faith alone, the faith that receives salvation is never alone;

diverse understandings of merit, reward, purgatory, and indulgences; Marian devotion and the assistance of the saints in the life of salvation; and the possibility of salvation for those who have not been evangelized—

these signers assert that despite possible differences over these issues, they have a "common faith" and are "brothers and sisters in Christ." All these other matters, we must conclude, are of secondary importance.

Now, it is possible to frame a statement so vague and general that anyone with few scruples and less intelligence can subscribe to it. Some silly apologist (I will not use any names) might argue that pantheists like Spinoza and Hegel, limited monotheists like Plato, semi-Aristotelians like Thomas Aquinas, materialists like Hobbes, and

aristocratic pagans like Aristotle all agree that God exists. But our foolish apologist has confused a verbal agreement with a meeting of the minds. Such apparent agreements are possible, so long as one does not define the term "god." Once the word "god" is defined, it can easily be seen that Aristotle and Moses, for example, do not believe in the same God.

To some extent, merely verbal agreement seems to be what characterizes "The Gift of Salvation." The signers have defined neither "salvation," nor "gift," nor "justification" with any precision, and they have deliberately avoided deciding such questions as merit, baptismal regeneration, the assistance of the "saints" and Mary, purgatory, the sacraments, and indulgences. They have engaged in a great deal of deliberate ambiguity, believing that they are "brothers and sisters in Christ" and share a "common faith" without defining those terms.

Beginning by quoting Scripture, the Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group next offers a prayer of thanks to God for his ecumenical blessings; and then, third, the Group confesses a faith: "We confess together one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; we confess Jesus Christ the Incarnate Son of God [so far the Group's confession has not progressed beyond the theology confessed by the demons quoted in the New Testament]; we affirm the binding authority of Holy Scripture . . .," and here we must pause. Notice that "binding authority" means much less than it seems to. It does not mean "infallibility" or "inerrancy"; it does not mean ultimate authority; it does not mean exclusive authority; it does not state on whom Scripture is binding; nor does it state what Scripture is. To take merely the last issue: Charles Colson, if he is a Christian—and his religious activities make it more and more doubtful—must believe that the Apocrypha is not a part of Holy Scripture. And Richard John Neuhaus, if he is a Roman Catholic, must believe that it is. Certainly Cardinals O'Connor, George, and Cassidy believe there are 73, not 66, books in Holy Scripture. So expressing agreement on the "binding authority of Holy Scripture," without defining what "Scripture" is, nor what "binding authority" is, is meaningless. A Muslim or a Mormon could have signed the

statement about Scripture. It is a ploy intended to deceive the naive, and it has largely succeeded. There has been virtually no vocal opposition to "The Gift of Salvation."

To continue with the Cassidy Group's confession: "we acknowledge the Apostles' and Nicene creeds as faithful witnesses to that Word," a clause that ensures church tradition is part of the Group's confession. Does the Group also wish to say that Jesus went to Hell, as the misleadingly named Apostles' Creed asserts?

After quoting Scripture, offering prayer, and voicing confession, the Group violates the Third Commandment by attributing to the Holy Spirit the Group's own statement: "the Holy Spirit, who calls and empowers us to confess together. . . ." Charismatics and Pentecostals violate the Third Commandment daily by falsely claiming that God told them this or that; here the Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group commits a similar sin by attributing its confession to the Holy Spirit. Kent Hill, President of Eastern Nazarene College and one of the document's signers, is quoted in *Christianity Today* (January 12, 1998), "I want to be careful not to overstate my belief that God has been involved in this process, but in some of the meetings we had a clear sense that someone else was seated at the table." Perhaps that someone else was not God, Mr. Hill; perhaps it was the pope; perhaps it was Screwtape.

In the next few sentences, tradition once again appears: "Through prayer and study of Holy Scripture [*Maccabees* or *Bel and the Dragon*, perhaps?], and aided by the Church's reflection on the sacred text from earliest times . . ." Again, of course, "Church" is not defined, nor is "original sin" in the next paragraph.

In paragraph 4, the Group unequivocally asserts its universalist position on salvation, and they do it by cleverly misquoting Scripture: "God the Creator is also God the Redeemer, offering salvation to the world. 'God desires all to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.' (*1 Timothy* 2:4)." If one reads the context of the quotation, it is clear that Paul wrote that God desires the salvation of all his

people, the sheep of his pasture, not of the goats, who are condemned to everlasting punishment. If God desires the salvation of all men without exception, as the Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group asserts, then his desires are clearly frustrated, and he is not God. In fact, Roman/Arminian theology requires us to say that Hell is populated with people whom God loves. The Arminian-Universalist view contradicts both the love and the sovereignty of God, and removes all grounds of confidence in God.

## *Justification*

After two unexceptional paragraphs (5 and 6), paragraph 7 takes up the issue of justification. Reading this paragraph may surprise some members of non-Catholic churches who are not readers of *The Trinity Review* and who have heard that the Roman State-Church teaches salvation by works. The Roman State-Church's theology is more subtle—although many Roman Catholic laymen believe in salvation by works, for that is the way the Roman doctrine of justification actually works out in practice.

After acknowledging that justification has been much debated by "Protestants and Catholics" (this is the only occurrence of the word "Protestant" in the document; the signers call themselves "Evangelicals," not Protestants, for they are not protesting any doctrine of Rome), the Group writes: "We agree that justification is not earned by any good works or merits of our own; it is entirely God's gift, conferred through the Father's sheer graciousness, out of the love that he bears to us in his Son, who suffered on our behalf and rose from the dead for our justification. . . . In justification, God, on the basis of Christ's righteousness alone, declares us to be no longer his rebellious enemies but his forgiven friends, and by virtue of his declaration it is so."

Now, Christ was not raised "for" our justification; he was raised because God the Father accepted the death of that sinless man as a substitute for the deaths of his sinful people. The English word "for" has several meanings, and the Group has chosen a common and incorrect meaning for this passage. Christ's resurrection is not the cause of our

justification; his death is the cause of our justification. His resurrection, by indicating that the justice of God has been satisfied, guarantees the later resurrection of his people. (The reader may wish to consult Horatius Bonar, *The Everlasting Righteousness*, on this point.)

But there is a far more serious error in this statement, and it appears in the last clause: "and by virtue of his [God's] declaration it is so," that is, in justification, we are not merely *declared* righteous, we are actually *made* righteous. The gift of justification, it turns out, is an inherent righteousness. Although it comes out of God's grace and love, and on the basis of Christ's righteousness alone, the gift of salvation is not the legal imputation of Christ's righteousness to his people, but the infusion of Christ's righteousness into his people. In this way—a very clever and subtle way—the Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group reject the Christian doctrine of justification and the gift of salvation.

The Reformation debate over justification centered on the question of whether justification is a forensic act (a legal act) or a moral act of God; that is, is justification objective or subjective; is it outside the believer, or inside the believer? Does justification—as a legal and judicial declaration of "Not Guilty"—rest on any virtue or merit in the sinner, either before or after conversion, or does it rest wholly on the perfect life and death of the sinner's substitute and legal representative, Jesus Christ? Does justification change the legal status of the believer before the law and justice of God, or does it change the believer's heart? The Reformers said that justification is a legal and objective, not a moral and subjective, act; that it is God's pardon and forgiveness, and God's legal imputation—not moral infusion—of Christ's righteousness to the believer, and the legal imputation—not infusion—of the believer's sin to Christ that saves a believer. In this legal transaction, faith is merely the instrument God uses to accomplish justification; it is the only means by which this legal transaction can be accomplished. The sinner is not made righteous by justification, any more than Christ was made sinful by his atonement. The heart of the sinner remains sinful, even though he is regenerate, and because it

is sinful his righteousness can never merit salvation. "All our righteousnesses"—Isaiah did not say unrighteousnesses—"are filthy rags."

In the nineteenth century, an Anglican churchman turned Roman Catholic, John Henry Newman, wrote *An Essay on Justification* in which he put forth what seems to have been a novel view. Newman understood the Reformers' position, and rejected it; he was looking for the middle way—the *via media*—between Rome and Protestantism. He hit upon an idea and an analogy that has been eagerly embraced ever since by ecumenicists of all denominations, whether Roman or non-Roman. Newman argued—just as "The Gift of Salvation" asserts—that if God said something, it must be so. He and his twentieth-century disciples gave the example of God's speaking in Genesis: "Let there be light." God's command made it so. Likewise, they asserted, in justification, when God says, "Let this man be righteous," he actually becomes righteous. Justification, Newman asserted, is *both* objective and subjective; God issues a command, but just because he is God, the command makes a moral change in the heart of the believer. And all of this, according to Newman, is justification. Newman—as cleverly and subtly as anyone in the history of Anglican or Roman theology—had thought of a way to overthrow the Protestant doctrine of justification. The issue is not whether justification is an external or an internal act; according to Newman, it is both. For his efforts at subverting the truth, Newman was later made a cardinal in the Roman State-Church.

In this century, prominent theologians such as the Roman Catholic Hans Kung and the neo-orthodox Karl Barth have both adopted Newman's Anglo-Catholic doctrine of justification. Hans Kung, for example, wrote in his book, *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection*:

God's *declaration* of justice is, as *God's* declaration of justice, at the same time and in the same act, a *making* just. . . . The term "justification" as such expresses an actual declaration of justness and not an inner renewal. Does it follow from this that God's declaration of justice does not imply an

inner renewal? On the contrary. It all comes down to this, that it is a matter of *God's* declaration of justice and not man's word: the utterance of the Lord, mighty in power. Unlike the word of man, the word of God *does* what it signifies. God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. . . . The sinner's justification is exactly like this. God pronounces the verdict, "You are just." And the sinner is just, really and truly, outwardly and inwardly, wholly and completely. His sins *are* forgiven, and man is just in his heart.

Karl Barth wrote this about justification:

Certainly we have to do with a declaring righteous, but it is a declaration about man which is fulfilled and therefore effective in this event, which corresponds to actuality because it creates and therefore reveals the actuality. It is a declaring righteous which without any reserve can be called a making righteous.

Kung wrote, "There is no essential difference between the Barthian and the Catholic position." We write: There is no essential difference between the Colson-Neuhaus Group's position and the Roman position. Not only is there no essential difference between the neo-orthodox and the Roman position on justification, there is no essential difference between the Lutheran, liberal, neo-orthodox, Roman, ersatz-evangelical, Wesleyan, Arminian, holiness (re-read and note the perfectionism of Barth's and Kung's statements), charismatic, and Pentecostal positions on justification. All the modern religionists agree—against the Reformers and the Bible—that justification is a *making* righteous, a subjective, moral change in the believer.

Now, what is wrong with John Henry Newman's synthesis on justification, which has been adopted by so many pseudo-Christians in the twentieth century? It is afflicted by one small error that alone overthrows both the analogy and the Roman doctrine of justification. When God speaks his creative word in Genesis, he is giving a command;

grammarians would point out that the sentence is in the imperative mood: "Let there be light." Since God is omnipotent—since none of his desires is frustrated, since he does all his holy will, and none can stay his hand—his command achieves exactly what he intended it to achieve, and the light shines forth. (How diabolically subtle for this group to attempt to use the omnipotence of God to subvert justification. They deny God's omnipotence in the election of sinners.)

The trouble with Newman's doctrine is that creation and justification are not "exactly alike." They are not even similar. When God justifies a person, he does not say, "Let this man be righteous"; he does not speak in the imperative mood; he does not give a command to anyone or anything. In justification, God *declares* the righteousness of the sinner on the basis of the substitution of his only legal representative, Jesus Christ; God speaks in the indicative mood; he speaks in declarative, not imperative, sentences; and consequently, justification does *not* involve any actual moral change in the believer. Justification remains purely an objective, legal act; it is not analogous to the creative words in Genesis. In justification, God the Judge, not God the Creator, declares—not commands—that his justice is already satisfied by the death of Christ for his people, that the sacrifice of Christ is enough, that he will not impute the sinner's sins to him, but to his representative, Christ, and that the sinner is pardoned completely for his sins. The sinner is not made just, to use Kung's own words, "outwardly and inwardly, wholly and completely." If words mean something, Kung was saying that he and all believers are perfect, sinless. If words mean something, "The Gift of Salvation" says the same thing: "And by virtue of this declaration, it is so."

Notice, more importantly, that this Newmanian-Kungian-Barthian-Roman theory of creative justification makes the incarnation, sinless life, substitutionary death, atonement, and resurrection of Christ—indeed much of Christian theology—unnecessary and irrelevant to justification. God makes sinners righteous merely by commanding them to be so. Justification is accomplished by the pure creative *fiat* of God, "exactly like" creation,

Kung said. Therefore, justification is not a judicial or legal or forensic act at all; it is a creative act accomplished by the pure omnipotence of God. This Christ-less doctrine of justification, were it true, would have saved Christ a lot of trouble. God need merely have spoken, as he did in Genesis, and men would be just.

Furthermore, the doctrine of creative justification, by regarding Christ as, at best, superfluous, focuses on the sinner, not on Jesus Christ. The sinner—the man—is central; the work of Christ is unnecessary. Oh, the life and death of Christ may be useful as a moral example, or as a device to evoke our pity, but because justification is creative, not judicial, Christ's work does not satisfy the justice of the Father, nor legally benefit his church. This is religious subjectivism with a vengeance.

Furthermore, even if God's declaration of justification were a command, it would not effect the moral holiness of the sinner, but his legal righteousness, for legal righteousness, not moral holiness, is what the declaration is about. To get from God's declaration of the sinner's legal righteousness to the transformation of the sinner's heart, one must in fact change the meaning of justification altogether. Newman and his disciples do so, stealthily and surreptitiously.

Now, "The Gift of Salvation" mentions Christ's righteousness as the "basis" for God's justifying act, but Christ's righteousness is really superfluous: The document says that it is by virtue of "God's declaration" that "it is so." Just like Newman, Kung, and Barth, the Cassidy Group makes Christ's active obedience, his atonement, suffering, and death, and the imputation of his righteousness to the sinner—and the sinner's sins to Christ—irrelevant to justification, which is accomplished by God's creative command.

Furthermore, the word *justification* itself has taken on a new meaning: In the mouths of the Cassidy Group, just as in the mouths of Newman, Kung, and Barth, *justification* means *making* righteous. It is the Roman doctrine of justification. That is why the Roman Cardinals and Bishops had no problem with this statement about justification. The ersatz-

evangelicals were too witless, too stupid, to understand the statement they signed. Is that too cruel? Well, it would be much crueler to say that they understood what they signed and signed it anyway. I am trying to be as charitable as possible.

If Newman's, Kung's, Barth's, Cassidy's, Colson's, and Neuhaus' doctrine of justification were correct, it would not only make sinners actually righteous, it would make Christ actually sinful, for in the same divine act in which the sinner receives the righteousness of Christ, Christ receives the sins of the sinner. The notion that justification is a moral, internal change cuts both ways: The sinner becomes morally righteous, and Christ becomes morally sinful. If justification is a moral transaction, as the Roman State-Church teaches, then Jesus Christ is a sinful man. However, if justification is a legal exchange of the righteousness of Christ for the sin of his people, then there is no theological problem—and no blasphemy. Imputation makes the sinner legally righteous, but not actually righteous; imputation makes Christ legally sinful, and so liable to punishment on behalf of those he represents, but it does not make Christ actually sinful. But if justification is an internal moral change as the Roman State-Church teaches, and if it involves Christ's work at all, then not only does the sinner become actually righteous, but Christ becomes actually sinful. That is the price one pays for errors in the doctrine of justification: blasphemy.

The doctrine of justification in "The Gift of Salvation," like the doctrine of justification in "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," is the Roman doctrine. The Roman State-Church has yielded nothing in approving this document; that is why the papal representative—Cardinal Cassidy—at the Group's meetings put his stamp of approval on it. But the Roman State-Church has gained a great deal; it has confused and persuaded many non-Catholics; and it has successfully used Charles Colson as a dupe in its plans to achieve a new Roman Empire.

In paragraph 8, on faith, "The Gift of Salvation" asserts that "the gift of justification is received through faith." Not through "faith alone," please note. That little word *alone* is what makes the

difference between Christianity and a false gospel at this point. Its absence is one more indication that the doctrine of justification espoused by the Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group is not Christian. The Roman State-Church teaches that justification is also received through baptism, penance, and other rites and sacraments of the Roman State-Church.

Furthermore, "faith is not merely intellectual assent but an act of the whole person, involving the mind, the will, and the affections, issuing in a changed life." Here, the document virtually quotes Pope John Paul's II encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* and adopts modern faculty psychology; the "whole person," we are told, is not merely a mind and will (clearly implied by the words "intellectual" and "assent"), but also affections. Apparently a whole person (the persons of the Trinity included?) has three parts—mind, will, and affections—and faith is not merely intellectual assent, but something emotional as well. The Group sees an act of the affections as essential to the idea of faith. That, of course, cannot be supported by any Scripture, and the Cassidy Group makes no attempt to do so. Indeed, it is difficult to understand what an act of the affections is, unless it is an emotional state or act, such as romantic love, lust, hatred, or envy. The last phrase, "issuing in a changed life," is also ambiguous. Is the changed life a part of the faith by which we are justified? If so, then one can see exactly why Romanist laymen—and millions of so-called Protestants—believe in salvation by works.

Incredibly, the Group follows this confused discussion of mind, will, and affections by asserting that "We understand that what we here affirm is in agreement with what the Reformation traditions have meant by justification by faith alone (*sola fide*)." If the Group were merely reporting its misunderstanding of theology, then the statement would indicate that it needs considerable instruction in Reformation theology. But, of course, the Group is not merely reporting its misunderstanding; it is asserting that its garbled faculty psychology and consequent garbled account of faith is what the Reformers taught. The statement is a blatant attempt to misrepresent the doctrine of justification through faith alone.

In paragraph 9, the Cassidy Group continues to explain its Roman doctrine of justification: "In justification we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"; that is, justification is a subjective moral change in the sinner. This is simply false. The document rejects—while brazenly claiming to accept—the Biblical and Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone—an objective, not subjective, a legal, not moral, an imputed, not infused, righteousness, the righteousness of Christ. The fact that the Cassidy Group is so brazen indicates its low opinion of theological education in American Protestantism, and its low opinion is probably still too high an estimate. The fact that the Group boldly claims to be adopting the Reformation view while actually rejecting it shows that it has little fear of contradiction in making such preposterous claims, for not one "Protestant" in a thousand understands the issues of the Reformation.

Paragraph 10, on baptism, is a model of subtlety; its main sentence can be understood in at least two different ways by those who believe in baptismal regeneration and by those who do not: "By baptism we are visibly incorporated into the community of faith and committed to a life of discipleship."

Paragraph 12 seems to depart from the Roman State-Church's teaching on assurance: "We may therefore have assured hope for the eternal life promised to us in Christ. . . . While we dare not presume upon the grace of God, the promise of God in Christ is utterly reliable. . . ." It was precisely the claim of the Reformers that the individual could be assured of salvation that was explicitly denied by the Roman State-Church at the Council of Trent. No doubt the Cassidy Group, if pressed on the issue, would distinguish between "assurance" and "assured hope," denying the former and asserting the latter, thus keeping themselves within the confines of Trent. I doubt that this issue escaped the attention of either the Jesuits in the Group or the pope's "apostolic delegate," Cardinal Cassidy.

Paragraph 14, on evangelism, after speaking of the responsibility of evangelization, concludes with this sentence: "Many are in grave peril of being eternally lost because they do not know the way to salvation." Of course, the Bible teaches that all are

already lost, condemned because Adam's sin is immediately imputed to them; but that some—God's people, his church, his sheep, his elect, his friends—will be saved by the preaching of the Gospel. No one is lost *because* he does not hear the Gospel; he is already lost. No one is saved without hearing the Gospel. "The Gift of Salvation" seems to say that people will be lost because "they do not know the way to salvation."

Paragraph 15 asserts that "We must share the fullness of God's saving truth with all, including members of our several communities. Evangelicals must speak the gospel to Catholics and Catholics to Evangelicals, always speaking the truth in love. . . ." But if neither the ersatz-evangelicals nor the Romans who signed this document know and believe the Gospel—and we have already shown that they do not—then all this sharing and speaking and group-hugging is damned nonsense.

Paragraph 16 endorses religious freedom. It consists of only two sentences: "Moreover, we defend religious freedom for all. Such freedom is grounded in the dignity of the human person created in the image of God and must be protected also in civil law." Now the Roman State-Church for centuries has been one of the most vocal and violent opponents of religious freedom in all of human history. Its bloody tradition of persecution of dissenters did not stop in the sixteenth century with the success of the Protestant Reformation; its tradition of persecution is a living tradition that continues until the present day. Furthermore, religious persecution is not an accidental feature of the Roman system. It is not something attributable merely to bad popes, any more than Communist persecution is attributable to bad dictators such as Stalin and Mao. Both Communism and Romanism entail persecution; both are totalitarian. The entire Roman system is a denial of religious freedom; it is the claim that there is only one true ecclesiastical organization, that the pope is the head of that organization and the sovereign of the world, and that all men owe him obeisance. Apparently the Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group is convinced that Americans at the end of the twentieth century neither know nor remember church history, nor do they know the claims and traditions of the Roman

State-Church for the past 1,500 years. The Cassidy Group is correct in this assessment. This statement on religious freedom is no more credible than similar statements issued by the secular totalitarians, the Communists. Perhaps the Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group, in a future manifesto, will endorse the language of the Soviet Constitution of 1936 protecting religious freedom. The Communists always wrote and spoke in favor of religious and civil liberty. This short paragraph may be of the same nature: Something to lull the reader into thinking that Rome—one of whose mottoes is *semper eadem*, always the same—has indeed changed its totalitarian spots. Rome cannot change on this issue—any more than the Communists could—without surrendering her central political and religious principles.

Paragraphs 17 and 18 list the "interrelated questions that require further and urgent exploration" during the Group's "continuing conversations." These secondary questions are listed at the beginning of this essay. The reference to "continuing conversations" indicates that the Group has not disbanded, and does not intend to disband until the wound inflicted on the beast has been healed.

The final paragraph of "The Gift of Salvation" may be the most disingenuous in the document: "As Evangelicals who thank God for the heritage of the Reformation and affirm with conviction its classic confessions. . . ." The ersatz-evangelicals who signed this document not only do not believe the "classic confessions" of the Reformation: Most, if not all of them, do not even understand those confessions.

How can I make such an accusation? The evidence is abundant: First, they signed "The Gift of Salvation." Second, the signers are employed by, represent, and have founded institutions and organizations that ignore, contradict, and deny the system of truth presented in the "classic confessions" of the Reformation—confessions such as the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the *Westminster Confession*, and the *Judgments of the Synod of Dordt*. Look at the list of institutions with which these ersatz-evangelicals are affiliated: Beeson Divinity School, Campus Crusade for Christ, the

Episcopal Church, Eastern Nazarene College, the Church of Christ, Fuller Theological Seminary, Wheaton College, Drew University, and so on. This statement—that the ersatz-evangelicals "thank God for the heritage of the Reformation and affirm with conviction its classic confessions"—is even more incredible than the Group's affirmation of religious freedom.

## *The Reaction to "The Gift of Salvation"*

According to *Christianity Today* (January 12, 1998), "Signers of the document ["The Gift of Salvation"] . . . gave assurances that 'for the first time in 450 years, evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics have publicly agreed to a common understanding of salvation.' " Colson himself has been reported as saying that if an agreement like this had been reached five centuries ago, "the Protestant-Catholic split might not have taken place" (*Christianity Today*, January 12, 1998).

The reaction to "The Gift of Salvation" from those who did not participate in the Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group indicates deep theological confusion. Roger Nicole, Professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Maitland, Florida, told *Christianity Today*: "Although I might have used a slightly different expression in a few places, if I had written this text, I am so pleased with the context and the mood of this document, and especially of Timothy George's assessment, that I enthusiastically add my signature to your list [of signers]." Mr. Nicole seems oblivious to the meaning and content of the document, focusing on its "context and mood." The fact that Nicole holds a teaching position at a putatively Reformed Seminary indicates that the heirs of Reformation don't understand the issues. The Presbyterians who pay Nicole's salary should stop doing so.

Phil Roberts, Director of Interfaith Witness for the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board (his business card must be set in three point type) pointed out that "The basic agreements regarding salvation appear to be

nullified by the questions which the document says require further exploration. How is it that sacramental grace is still an outstanding question [when] salvation by faith alone is affirmed by the document?" However, as we have seen, salvation by faith alone is not affirmed by the document—it only seems that way, and Mr. Roberts has not seen the central flaw in the document's doctrine of justification.

Paige Patterson, President of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, said that it "was an achievement to get the Catholic signers to affix their signatures to a statement this lucid on justification by faith. On the other hand, Baptist evangelicals don't have any business signing any doctrinal consensus papers with Rome until Rome disassociates itself from the Council of Trent" (*The Christian News*, December 15, 1997). Mr. Patterson doesn't understand justification by faith alone either, if he thinks "The Gift of Salvation" is lucid.

Mark Coppenger, President of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City told *Christianity Today*: "I loved most of what I read in this document, both the content and the spirit," but he did not sign it because it appeared to him that the Catholics were hedging.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr. President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, hesitated at saying the document affirms justification by faith alone: "Justification by faith alone, if genuinely affirmed by Catholics and evangelicals, would require repudiation of baptismal regeneration, purgatory, indulgences, and many other issues presently affirmed by Roman Catholic doctrine."

In his introduction to "The Gift of Salvation" in *Christianity Today* (December 8, 1997), Timothy George noted that the document produced by the Cassidy Group is an "unofficial" counterpart of the official "Lutheran-Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" issued earlier in 1997. Rome realizes what the central theological issue is, and Rome is moving deliberately and effectively to heal the wound inflicted on her in the sixteenth

century by the preaching of the Gospel. Rome apparently is finding plenty of eager dupes—useful idiots, Lenin called them—among the ersatz-evangelicals to accomplish its goal.

The twentieth century has been an ecumenical century. Rome has moved as never before to heal its wound, and to incorporate all professors and churches within itself. These conversations, dialogues, and working relationships with non-Roman ecclesiastical organizations are far too numerous to list here; they have ranged from conversations with the Anglicans in Belgium in the 1920s, led by Cardinal Mercier, to continuous ecumenical efforts with the Lutherans, Anglicans, National Council and World Council of Churches, the charismatics and Pentecostals, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the ersatz-evangelicals. Billy Graham, the most famous Arminian evangelist of the twentieth century, has sought and received the participation of Romanists in his "crusades" since the late 1950s. The Vatican intends to reinstate its monopoly, and many are worshipping the beast.

The existence of groups like the Colson-Neuhaus Group is not new; what it demonstrates, however, is how thoroughly theologically corrupt the ersatz-evangelicals are. Christians have long known that the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, the mainline denominations, and the charismatic movement are anti-Christian; now the Cassidy-Colson-Neuhaus Group is making it clear that Evangelicalism is fundamentally at one with Romanism. The Synod of Dordt condemned the Arminian theology of the ersatz-evangelicals as a doctrine from the pit of Hell. Except for a scattered remnant, the American heirs of the Reformation have repudiated the faith of their fathers, they have abandoned the Gospel, and they are falling over each other in their eagerness to fawn before the beast. In the beast they see power and influence, success, respectability, fame, and riches--and they want to enjoy the things the beast can provide.

*Let no one deceive you by any means, for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is*

*called god or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God showing himself that he is God. . . . For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. . . . The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who do not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

*Now a great sign appeared in Heaven: a woman clothed with the Sun, with the Moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then, being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.*

*And another sign appeared in Heaven: Behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of Heaven and threw them to the Earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and his throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

*And war broke out in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for him in Heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the Earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

*Then I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O*

*Heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the Earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."*

*Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the Earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the Earth helped the woman, and the Earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.*

*Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast. . . .*

*Then I saw another beast coming up out of the Earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the Earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from Heaven on the Earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the Earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the Earth to make an image of the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.*

**For further reading:**

Charles Hodge. *Justification by Faith Alone*. The Trinity Foundation, 1994. Paperback, \$8.95.

Horatius Bonar. *The Everlasting Righteousness*. The Trinity Foundation, 1995. Paperback, \$8.95.