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BOOK REVIEWS

Faith and confession, word and act, must go together. God redeems women and men, old and young, high and low, by claiming them as children of God, so giving them the greatest joy they can experience. Men and women, young and old, people of every station in life, in turn glorify and serve God by acknowledging that claim, and living out that gift and challenge, in every fiber of their beings and every aspect of their existence. The gift is God's, in Christ, made alive in the human heart by the Holy Spirit. But God accommodates the proclamation of this message of salvation to the measure of human beings by making them the instruments of sharing it with each other. The piety of Calvin was that of a pastor passionately and wholly committed to living out God's claim on him, and calling others to hear and heed, to rejoice in and witness to God's claim on them as the purpose and joy of their lives.

ELSIE ANNE MCKEE, IN *JOHN CALVIN:
WRITINGS ON HIS PASTORAL PIETY* (2001)



HOW NOT TO SHARE YOUR FAITH: THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF CATHOLIC APOLOGETICS AND EVANGELIZATION

Mark Brumley

San Diego, California: Catholic Answers,
2002

124 pages, paper, \$9.95

The Vatican II Council (1962-65) has been the catalyst of many discussions between Roman Catholics and Protestants.¹ Upon the close of the Council a theological dialogue was begun between Lutherans and Roman Catholics in the United States.² Readers of the *Reformation & Revival Journal* would be aware of the efforts of Chuck Colson, Richard John Neuhaus, and others in the "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" projects.³

During this time, there were a number of evangelicals who, for various reasons, converted to Roman Catholicism. This group would include Scott Hahn who received his training at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and had served as a Presbyterian pastor.⁴

The author of the book under review is one such convert from evangelicalism. Mark Brumley came to faith in Christ in a Protestant fundamentalist setting. He joined the Catholic church in 1980. When I met Mark, he was working for Karl Keating at Catholic Answers, an apologetics ministry based in San Diego.⁵ He left Catholic Answers and went to work for the Catholic Diocese of San Diego. Brumley now serves at Ignatius Press and is general editor of a forthcoming work, *The Ignatius Catholic Encyclopedia of Apologetics*.

The book being reviewed has a preface by Avery Cardinal

Dulles, S. J., who, at age eighty-two, is perhaps the most formidable theological thinker in American Catholicism. In addition to commenting on the debilitating effect that liberalism had on the doctrines of the Christian faith, Dulles identifies neo-orthodoxy as a negative influence as well. This last point is often overlooked in Roman Catholic thinking.

In chapter 1, the First Deadly Sin of Catholic Apologetics is "Biting Off More than You Can Chew" (or trying to prove the unprovable). In order to negate "fideism" (the view that reason has little or no role in understanding the Christian faith), Catholic apologists (and some Protestants as well) have often gone too far. While faith is not "irrational," before man can believe we "must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior help of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God."⁶ Brumley uses the example of Mortimer Adler, who "in 1984 became a Christian . . . going from being a person who merely affirmed the existence of God . . . to one who believed and loved God" (25). In this chapter, the question of "feelings" and the "objective" vs. "subjective" aspects of apologetics is discussed.

Chapter 2 addresses the Second Deadly Sin of Catholic Apologetics—"Reducing Everything to Apologetics and Argument" (31). Brumley states that "some people become so hooked on apologetical arguments that they forget apologetics is a means to the end of believing God's Word; it should not become the goal" (32). And, "the point of the Catholic faith is not to argue or even make converts. It is to know and love God" (33). In this chapter, Brumley tells Catholics that evangelicals are right to emphasize the centrality of Jesus to the gospel. He also states that one of the major problems in the contemporary Catholic church is "that the typical Catholic priest or deacon, not to mention the ordinary layman, does not know the Bible well enough to defend the faith" (39).

The Third Deadly Sin (chapter 3) is to confuse the Christian faith with *our* arguments for it. The gospel is true whether or not we are successful in our apologetic endeavors. "Jesus promised that the truth would set us free. He said nothing

about your or my theory of the truth" (46). A little humility is needed here.

The Fourth Deadly Sin (chapter 4) is contentiousness. Brumley identifies some ex-evangelical Catholic apologists as being guilty here; they are always looking for a fight (of course, as evangelicals, we have more than our share of pugnacious individuals who are always spoiling for a debate). It is here that Brumley raises two important issues: religious differences based on terminology and differences over taste or emphasis. An example of the former would be the Orthodox calling the Eucharistic Sacrament "the Divine Liturgy," while Roman Catholics use the term, "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass"; they both refer to the same event.

The second point is addressed by the fact that while Protestants use empty crosses in their churches, Catholics use crucifixes in theirs. The Protestant "empty" cross speaks to the Resurrection of Christ; the corpus on the Catholic cross calls attention to the crucifixion of Jesus, "there is no real difference of belief, only of emphasis" (50).⁷ Brumley addresses the need for Catholic apologists to stress what their faith affirms rather than always stating denials (good advice for evangelicals as well). In dealing with the doctrine of *sola scriptura*, which evangelicals affirm and Catholics deny, he calls attention to a significant work by Fr. Louis Bouyer, *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*.⁸ Evangelicals will be surprised to find that Bouyer, in spite of being an apologist for the Catholic church, speaks of the positive aspects of the Reformation, in particular, Martin Luther.⁹

Also, treated in chapter 4 is the appearance of a document, "Lutheran-Catholic Joint Declaration on Justification (JDDJ)." This effort has caused a great amount of comment /controversy from both sides of the Catholic-Protestant divide. JDDJ was the product of thirty years of dialogue between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Pontifical Commission for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). While there has been some positive reaction to the document, hard-liners from both sides have voiced disapproval. Brumley counsels his triumphalistic brethren to take a closer look at

what the declaration actually says.¹⁰

Chapter 5 addresses the Fifth Deadly Sin—not distinguishing enemies from allies. In many ways, this is the most important chapter in this book: Brumley identifies the real enemy; indeed, “in the grand scheme of things, it is not Catholics vs. Protestants so much as believers vs. unbelievers; absolutists vs. relativists. It is truth vs. error, with the old serpent, the Father of Lies, using others to front for him” (59). Brumley catalogs the doctrines that Catholics and evangelicals share, such as the nature of the triune God, the incarnation, death, resurrection and coming again of Christ and the reality of heaven and hell.¹¹ Therefore, he states “[Catholics] should not spend all our time and energy arguing with those who know Christ while neglecting those who do not” (60). Wise counsel for evangelicals as well.

Brumley chides his fellow Catholic apologists for often misstating Protestant theology or not understanding distinctions between various Protestant groups. (An example that comes to mind is the Lord’s Supper: many Roman Catholics believe that the only evangelical position is that the Eucharistic Feast is a “mere memorial” event; in reality, the Reformed view of Holy Communion is that Christ is present “virtually” (Calvin’s term) albeit not “corporally.”) Catholic apologists who have come from evangelical academic venues are particularly responsible for setting the record straight on these issues. The mission of evangelization among Jews and Muslims is addressed in this chapter. Brumley makes the point that on cultural issues, both groups can be co-belligerents with Christians. We should attempt to find points of contact without minimizing the centrality of Christ in the gospel message. Brumley ends the chapter with, “In this spiritual battle, we cannot afford casualties lost to friendly fire” (70).

The next Deadly Sin is covered in chapter 6: Trying to win the argument, even at the expense of bringing people to truth. Brumley uses as an example, the way certain Catholic apologists approach the historical record concerning the Inquisition. In reaction to such sensational works as *The Mystery of Babylon Revealed*, these Catholic apologists go to the opposite

extreme and “whitewash” what was genuine abuse by the medieval Church. Indeed the fact that this abuse existed, is illustrated by the fact that Pope John Paul II has apologized for the Catholic church for the evils of the Inquisition.

Chapter 7 deals with the last Deadly Sin of Catholic Apologetics—pride. This sin can lead to “triumphalism,” which is a parochial, narrow-mindedness concerning one’s own tradition. Brumley puts it this way: “Truthfulness about Catholic shortcomings is obligatory because truth is obligatory” (86). Chapter 8 examines the Seven Deadly Sins to see if they are actually “sins.” Brumley holds that when true sin is involved, not just honest mistakes or errors in technique, repentance is necessary.

In chapters 9 and 10, Brumley offers advice on ways that the Seven Deadly Sins of Catholic Apologetics can be remedied. “Moral theologians say that one way to overcome a sinful habit is to develop the opposite virtue or habit” (93). “Seven Habits of Effective Apologists” are suggested as an antidote for the previously mentioned “Deadly Sins.” Prayer is the first habit on Brumley’s list. He quotes 1 Timothy 2:4, “God wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.” To this end “prayer can also help us as apologists to avoid the sin of pride, which, as we have seen, can tempt us to regard ourselves as the source and end of our apologetical endeavors” (98).

Study is the next habit mentioned. Brumley states that central to apologetic formation is a careful study of Scripture. Also, an understanding of Tradition (councils, creeds, church fathers) and the Magisterium—the most recent collection being the documents of the Vatican II Council. (Although evangelicals place extra-biblical tradition on a lower level than the Scriptures, they too would profit from exposure to this historical development.)¹² “Dialogue” is also a habit to be cultivated. This “puts into practice what the apologist learns through study” (106). Dialogue is not monologue; the apologist should listen carefully to his partner’s arguments and attempt to understand his worldview.

Brumley finishes the list of the effective habits of apolo-

gists with clarity, faith, hope and charity, the last three known as the theological virtues (1 Corinthians 13:13). He ends chapter 10 with, "In the final analysis, our love of God determines whether we are true apologists, not our love of arguments, our books, our audio tapes, or how many converts, we have made" (120). Good advice for evangelicals as well.

Let me be clear. Mark Brumley is not a "minimalist" who feels one Christian tradition is as legitimate as another. He is a traditional Roman Catholic who is firmly committed to the proposition that the Christian faith "subsists" in its most complete form in the Catholic church. However, this doesn't prevent Mark from being an active dialogue partner in discussions between evangelicals and Roman Catholics. In his book, he frequently alerts Catholics about areas where they can learn from their evangelical brethren.

He is sensitive to the fact that many in his church are nominal Catholics who are not truly converted. Catholic lay leaders such as Ralph Martin and Stephen Clark have acknowledged this.¹³ Clerics such as Léon Joseph Cardinal Suenens (who was active in the direction of the Vatican II Council) and Fr. Michael Scanlan, T.O.R. (President Emeritus, The Franciscan University of Steubenville) have addressed this issue as well.¹⁴ Indeed, "Bishop Flores of San Antonio hit at the heart of this problem when he spoke of many Catholics who have been 'sacramentalized' but never effectively 'evangelized.'"¹⁵

Mark Brumley has been a close friend and we have spoken together publicly several times. He has participated in a San Diego Christian Forum Conference (with evangelical philosopher Gary Habermas), which was well received by an audience including Roman Catholics and evangelicals. This is a good book; I recommend it highly. With minor adjustments, it could serve as a valuable primer for evangelical apologists. Mark takes seriously Peter's instruction to believers that we have a duty to give "reasons for the hope" we have in the gospel (1 Peter 3:15).

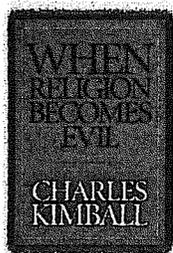
RALPH E. MACKENZIE
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Notes

1. Norman Geisler and Ralph MacKenzie, "Appendix D: Vatican II and the Current Situation," in *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Differences* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 463-76. Gerald M. Fagin, S. J., editor, *Vatican II: Open Questions and New Horizons* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier Inc., 1984). Ralph M. McInerney, *What Went Wrong With Vatican II?* (Manchester, New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press, 1998).
2. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, has published these discussions in a number of books.
3. Of the many books written on ecumenical interaction between these Christian traditions, I would call the reader's attention to: James S. Cutsinger, editor, *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics and Orthodox in Dialogue* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997).
4. See Scott and Kimberly Hahn, *Rome Sweet Home: Our Journey to Catholicism* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993). Although quite sectarian after his relocation to Catholicism, he has of late become more irenic, developing friendships among his former evangelical colleagues.
5. Karl Keating, *Catholicism and Fundamentalism: The Attack on "Romanism" by Bible Christians* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988). This book is a best seller and a major tool in Catholic apologetics. Catholic Answers is one of the largest ministries of its kind in the U. S. A. and prints and distributes many tracts and materials defending traditional Catholicism. Keating is a friend and has been in my home several times. Our relationship shows that Christians from different traditions can "disagree without being disagreeable."
6. Austin Flannery, editor. "Constitution on Divine Revelation," *Dei Verbum*, Vatican Council II, volume 1. New Revised Edition (Boston, Massachusetts: St. Paul Books & Media, 1992), 5:272. The distinction is made between the "natural law" and "divine revelation." Reformed theology uses the terms "general" and "special" revelation.
7. One of the finest treatments concerning misunderstandings and actual disagreements, can be found in: Alister McGrath's chapter, "What Shall We Make of Ecumenism?" in *Roman Catholicism* (John Armstrong, editor. Chicago, Illinois: Moody), 199-217).
8. Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1956.
9. A current work by a Reformed evangelical that is valuable for its insights is *The Shape of Sola Scriptura*, by Keith A. Mathison (Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2001).
10. See Ralph MacKenzie and James White, "Pro and Con: Two Journal Contributors Respond to the Joint Declaration on Justification," *Viewpoint*, *Christian Research Journal*, 22:4 (www.equip.org). For a treatment by a "hard-nosed" Catholic apologist, see Robert A. Sungenis, *Not By Faith Alone* (Santa Barbara, California: Queenship Publishing, 1996). For a more measured approach by a Catholic, see James Akin, *The Salva-*

tion Controversy (San Diego, California: Catholic Answers, 2001).

11. Geisler & MacKenzie, "Part One: Areas of Doctrinal Agreement" in *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals*.
12. For a treatment of these differences over Scripture and tradition, see: "Scripture," chapter 10 in *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals*, 177-201.
13. Ralph Martin, *A Crisis of Truth* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant Books, 1982) and Stephen B. Clark, *Redeemer* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant, 1992). Also, see: "The Important Contribution of Ralph Martin," chapter 20 in *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals*, 423-26.
14. Léon Joseph Cardinal Suenens, *A New Pentecost* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant, 1975), and Michael Scanlan, T. O. R., *Let the Fire Fall* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant, 1986).
15. Speech reported in the *Texas Catholic*, November 1970. Quoted in: Albert H. Boudreau, *The Born-Again Catholic* (Locus Valley, New York: Living Flame Press, 1983), 14.



WHEN RELIGION BECOMES EVIL

Charles Kimball

San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers

(2002)

237 pages, cloth, \$21.95

What happens when religion becomes violent and destructive? Both the question and the answer are on the minds of many Americans since September 11, 2001.

There can be little doubt that religious convictions, rightly or wrongly held, are at the core of evil and violence in the modern world. And there is no doubt that this has been true in the past. But is religion the problem? Many secularists certainly think so. But is the problem really religion itself? Charles Kimball, a Baptist minister and the professor of religion and chair of the department of religion at Wake Forest University, thinks the problem is not religion, per se, but the "corrupt" expressions of religion. To his thinking all religions have a potential for good or evil. Thus for Kimball the present global threat, which grows out of religious faith, must be met by exposing the expressions of religions that are not "authen-

tic" to that particular religion.

Kimball has worked widely with Muslims and Jews and is a religion and mid-East expert. He believes that religion "is arguably the most powerful and pervasive force on earth. Throughout history religious ideas and commitments have inspired individuals and communities to transcend narrow self-interest in pursuit of higher values and truths" (1).

Kimball observes that we may never know what was in the hearts and minds of those nineteen hijackers on September 11, but we do know for sure that they "were motivated by a particular understanding of Islam."

But what will our future be like in terms of the diversity of religious faith and practice in our time?

Political and economic instability and changing cultural values are readily evident both in our society and in the world community. Combine these ingredients with narrow religious worldviews and the violent patterns of behavior too often manifest in human history, and you have a highly volatile mix. And we now know with certainty that there are many potential weapons of mass destruction and that it doesn't take many people to wreak havoc on a global scale (4).

Part of the confusion occurs when various adherents of the world religions come to believe that their "particular version of Christianity or Islam or even Buddhism" is the "true" and only one, thus making every other expression of that religion false (5).

Kimball suggests that Christians are as guilty of this error as Muslims. He points to conservative Christian television programs suggesting that their "answers" to the financial and physical problems is neatly packaged and delivered in a dogmatic and even inflammatory way. He concludes that:

There is room for considerable disagreement and debate on these and other matters discussed throughout the book. Although many of us have been taught it is not polite to discuss religion and politics in public, we must quickly unlearn that lesson. Our collective failure to challenge presuppositions, think anew, and openly debate central religious concerns affect-

ing society is a recipe for disaster. We'd better take a few steps back and consider how we got where we are before simply pushing forward. As a wise friend once put it, "When you are standing on the edge of a cliff, progress is not defined as one step forward!" (7).

Kimball, citing the famous Wilfred Cantwell Smith as a prominent influence in his thinking, believes we need a new conversation that is not about "we" and "they." We must come to the place where we can talk about "us." It is precisely this particular emphasis that will put off many evangelical readers. Sadly, they will see Kimball as advocating a plurality of religions that are essentially equal thus truth claims are to be seen on an equal plane. The point here is not whether Kimball is an evangelical Christian in his theology (I would have to guess that he is not.). The point is to engage in the dialogue with those of other religious faiths in a way that allows us to genuinely hear what they are saying and believing.

In setting forward the question, "Is Religion the Problem" (chapter 2) Kimball cites the commandment of Jesus to love God and neighbor in Matthew 22:37-40. He then writes:

At the heart of all authentic, healthy, life-sustaining religions, one always finds this clear requirement. Whatever religious people may say about their love of God or the mandates of their religion, when their behavior toward others is violent and destructive, when it causes suffering among their neighbors, you can be sure the religion has been corrupted and reform is desperately needed (39).

This is the central importance of Kimball's book. Even the best religions do evil things, and when they do there is need for reform. Surely the most ardent intelligent and orthodox evangelical Christian can and should agree. Before we condemn religious fanaticism in others we should take the plank from our own eye. What Jesus taught and what Christians have practiced have far too often been widely divergent.

Kimball provides five basic corruptions that manifest themselves in each of the major religious faiths of the world. Each of these is a chapter in the book: (1) Absolute Truth Claims, (2)

Blind Obedience, (3) Establishing the "Ideal" Time, (4) The End Justifies the Means, and (5) Declaring Holy War.

The one that will most disturb evangelicals, and the one that Kimball least adequately writes about with convincing thought, is the first: Absolute Truth Claims. The problem lies in the use of the word "absolute." The word absolute means total, complete, entire and perfect. Evangelical Christians are correct to insist that Jesus is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6), but does this mean that we have "all" truth? Does it mean that God has given to us, and to us alone, the knowledge of all things related to truth and error? This is where the debate will be waged with orthodox Christians and Kimball is only moderately helpful here.

Kimball concludes, after showing how claims to "absolute truth" can be harmful, that:

A human view of truth, one that is dynamic and relational, enables religious people to embrace and affirm foundational truths without necessarily solidifying the words into static, absolute, propositional statements. Conversely, religious convictions that become locked into absolute truths can easily lead people to see themselves as God's agents. People so emboldened are capable of violent and destructive behavior in the name of religion (70).

I get the distinct impression that Kimball believes that truth claims for the divinity of Jesus should be treated as "true" for me but not necessarily "true" for the adherents of another religion. (I could be misreading him here but this appears to be the only logical conclusion to draw from how Kimball treats truth in general.) An affirmation that Jesus is divine is clearly a "propositional statement." If Jesus is in fact both God and man, as understood by all the earliest creeds and the historic Church, then this truth claim is in direct conflict with those of other religions and practices. At the same time it should be noted that proposition flows out of the story of Jesus as the great meta-narrative of the Bible. Is it, then, a claim for something "absolute" to say, "I believe in the full and essential deity of Jesus Christ, the son of God?" Of course

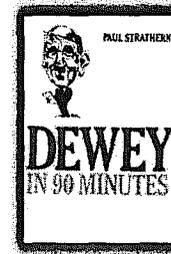
it is. Yet, I could argue that making this claim does not obligate me to treat others who profess a different faith as devoid of all good will and human kindness.

It must be understood that Christianity, like Islam, is a missionary religion. If we loose our will to carry out the commission of Jesus to "disciple all nations" then we live in disobedience to the King of Kings! If this is what Kimball means, he has embraced a religion of popular pluralism that will prove disloyal to the Jesus of Scripture.

Having given this very serious qualification I would still commend Kimball for prompting the most ardent Christian to realize that the claim of knowing Jesus as "the truth" does not mean that we have understood all religious matters with the same clarity. Further, to confess that Jesus is "the way" does not mean that we know how God will finally judge others. By this observation, I am not endorsing a wider-hope theology. I am admitting that there is a lot we do not yet know, and it is only right for us to admit it!

The great strength of this book is that it demonstrates how a serious professor of religion treats a burning and pressing issue. It gives thoughtful evangelicals a way to think about religious bigotry and pride that still dominates too much within our own tradition(s). The future of the American cultural experiment will depend, to no small degree, on how serious Christians learn to live alongside of those of other religions and how we learn to present Christ to them in an increasingly pluralistic context. Kimball, read carefully, will help us think more carefully.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG
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DEWEY IN 90 MINUTES

Paul Strathern

Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, publisher

90 pages, paper, \$6.95

In the first half of the previous century many regarded John Dewey as the most important philosopher of the age. There can be no doubt that he produced an original American philosophy, sometimes called pragmatism. He preferred to call it "instrumentalism" or "experimentalism." Dewey believed, in short, that ultimate reality is what we meet in everyday life. Truth is ultimately commonsensical. The reality we wake up to each morning contains no real mystery at all. What was observed out there was the truth. There was no "universal truth" still waiting to be discovered.

John Dewey was born in 1859 in Vermont. He grew up in a family of farmers and merchants and had an evangelical education. After teaching for a short time he entered John's Hopkins University to do a doctorate in philosophy. A late bloomer intellectually, he eventually developed the idea that logic was to be understood more as a kind of laboratory experiment. In the words of Strathern, it was "a plan of action intended to solve a particular problem. The truth of instrumental logic had nothing to do with how it did (or did not) match some notional reality" (25). What mattered to Dewey was function or instrumental use. How could philosophy solve problems or resolve conflicts? The word pragmatic, which also describes Dewey's thought, is often misunderstood and variously misused. From the Greek it came from a word meaning "active, businesslike, versed in affairs, relating to matter of fact" (26). Ultimately it was a scientific view of the world and it is the philosophy that dominated American thought in the twentieth century. It has also had a deleterious impact upon the Church, though few understand this aspect or discuss it now. If for no other reason this little book would

reward many ministers if they read it carefully.

John Dewey died in 1952 at the age of ninety-two. His life made as much impact upon both the Church and formal education as almost any thinker of his era. How do we understand our world and how do we relate to it? No question is more important. Dewey's answers are not those of serious and reflective Christian thought. A new generation seems to be more aware of this than the previous one. One can only hope that we will soon see the devastating impact of John Dewey's philosophy and begin to address it accurately.

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