



Right! and Wrong Again

By Carl McMurray

Did you see news this past week about all the Protestant church leaders that were riled at the pope. It seems that he re-released a statement from an earlier text released in 2000 that declared that “Christ established here on earth only one church.” Of course that would be the Roman Catholic Church. All other “churches” are not really churches at all—they are just “ecclesial communities” without the means of salvation. Oops. Talk about the pot calling the kettle black!

Simon says... excuse me, Pope says, that to be a real “church,” a community of believers must have an apostolic succession, tracing their bishops all the way back to Christ’s original apostles. If not, then their priestly ordinations are not valid. Nothing like making up your own rules to validate your own credibility is there?

While the pope certainly speaks the truth when he states that Christ only established one church here on earth (because he quotes scripture, Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-5), there is a question begging to be asked. Who says the “one church” is the Roman Catholic Church? That “apostolic succession” reasoning sounds pretty slick, but it’s bogus for three major reasons.

1. God’s word NEVER says one word about ANY man being made head over the church on earth, or about any kind of succession of leadership. The Catholic hierarchy made this one up.
2. God’s word DOES specify that there would be a great apostasy, or falling away, in 1 Thessalonians 2:ff. Doesn’t that mean that if we *could* trace our leadership directly back to the first century, we would be identified as the “great fallen away church”?
3. But most importantly, the Catholic Church can’t even do what it claims. They cannot trace their leadership back to the apostles anywhere besides in their own traditions. (Here they go again, making up their own credibility.) They would like us to forget that before 606 AD, THERE WAS NO POPE. There were 5 “patriarchs” claiming equal ruling powers over the church. Where was their successive leadership then?

The fact is that God says in Luke 8:11 that His word is the seed. Wherever that seed is planted and watered, Christians can spring up. Wherever these children of God bind themselves together in purpose, worship, and fellowship, churches grow. And they do it without having to ask permission of any Latin quoting, tradition bound, skirt wearing Italian scribe. We have no special priesthood because ALL true Christians are priests. We are free men and women in Christ Jesus, our High Priest. We are sons and daughters of God and Christ is our mediator. The Pope is wrong for binding centuries of men’s traditions upon believers. And Protestant churches are equally in error for every doggie-bag doctrine they carried away from Catholicism with them. We would encourage every man to study the Bible for themselves and come to Jesus after the fashion of the New Testament. The one that seeks will find. The one that asks will receive his answer. And the one that knocks is the one that is promised an open door.