

The 7 Visions of William Branham

In June 1933, while preparing for a two-week tent meeting in Jeffersonville, Indiana, William Branham tells that he experienced a series of 7 prophetic visions. He said:

The Lord Jesus spoke to me and said that the coming of the Lord was drawing nigh, but that before He came, seven major events would transpire. I wrote them all down and that morning I gave forth the revelation of the Lord.

Vision One (Completely fulfilled)

He saw in a vision that the dictator of Italy, Mussolini, would invade Ethiopia and according to the voice speaking to him, Ethiopia "would fall at his (Mussolini's) steps". However, the voice prophesied a dread end of the dictator, for he would have a horrible death and his own people would literally spit on him.

Retelling of the 1933 vision

The dictator that's now arising in Italy (which is Mussolini), he will come into power, and he will go to Ethiopia; and Ethiopia will fall at his steps." There's people setting here now that knows that there's a group of people come and stood...was going to throw me out of the hall for saying such a thing...when I said that. But did he do it? But I said, "He'll come to a shameful end," and he did. Him and the woman he run with was turned upside down and hung on a rope in the street with their feet up, their clothes hanging down. All right, that come to pass. (See Seventy Weeks of Daniel, August 6, 1961 for the full text of this prophecy.)

This prophecy seemed to conflict with the political situation in 1933. Mussolini had ruled Italy since 1922 with little opposition. There were US Italians who were very upset at these words.

Invasion of Ethiopia

In the late 1880's, many European nations scrambled to claim portions of Africa as colonies. Italy bought Eritrea from an Afar Sultan (a vassal of the Ethiopian Empire), which led to war between Ethiopia and Italy. Italy also claimed part of the bordering nation of Somalia. In 1896, at the Battle of Adowa, Ethiopia shocked the world by defeating Italy, resulting in a treaty of peace.

In 1934 Italian troops amassed in Italian Somaliland. In 1935, 100,000 soldiers attacked Ethiopia from Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, without a declaration of war. The League of Nations unanimously declared Italy an aggressor but took no action.

The Italians laced bombs with mustard gas, set up forced labour camps, installed public gallows, killed hostages and mutilated the corpses. Captured guerrillas were thrown out of aeroplanes in mid-flight, and Italian troops were photographed next to corpses on the gallows and standing around chests full of severed heads. The war lasted 7 months. Ethiopia was outmatched in arms and brutality. In May 1937, the Italian king was proclaimed emperor of Italian East Africa (merging Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somaliland into one).

When Italy entered WW2 on the side of Germany in June 1940, Britain co-operated with Ethiopians and others to expel the Italians from Ethiopia. Ethiopia was liberated in 1941.

Mussolini's Shameful End

On April 27, 1945, Italian communist partisans caught Mussolini and his mistress trying to escape to Switzerland before the Allies reached Milan. On April 28, he and his mistress were shot. The next day their bodies were found hanging upside down on meat hooks in Milan. The corpse of the former leader became subject to ridicule and abuse by many. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of his shameful end.

Vision Two (Completely fulfilled)

The next vision showed America being drawn into a world war against Germany led by the Austrian, Adolph Hitler. The voice predicted that this terrible war would overthrow Hitler and that he would come to a mysterious end. The vision also showed the Siegfried line where many American lives would be lost, but Hitler would be defeated.

(A subsequent vision predicted that President Roosevelt would declare war against Germany and in so doing would eventually be elected for a fourth term.)

Retelling of the 1933 vision

Our war will be with Germany, and they will build a great big concrete place and fortify themselves in there, and the Americans will take a horrible beating.' Almighty God knows that, Who I stand before now; I seen those independent Nazis kicking the Americans like that and things at that wall. And there's many boys standing here now that was at that Siegfried Line that knows what it was. And remember, that was eleven years before the *Siegfried Line* was built. Is God true? Does He still foretell things to happen? Watch. (See *Seventy Weeks of Daniel*, 1961, for the full text).

The next vision foretold that an Austrian by the name of Adolph Hitler would rise up as dictator over Germany, and that he would draw the world into war. It showed the Siegfried line and how our troops would have a terrible time to overcome it. Then it showed that Hitler would come to a mysterious end. (From Chapter 9 of the Church Ages Book (the Laodicean Church Age).

In 1933 Hitler had only just come to power. There was no sign of WW2, the build-up of the Siegfried line, or the mysterious death of Hitler.

Siegfried Line

The Siegfried Line was a defence system over 390 miles long with over 18,000 bunkers, tunnels and tank traps. It went from Kleve on the Dutch border, to Weil am Rhein on the Swiss border. More for propaganda than for strategic reasons, Hitler planned and had it built between 1938 and 1940.

Battles along the line include:

- Hurtgen Forest (Sept 1944 - Feb 1945; est'd 33,000 American & 9,000 German casualties)
- Aachen (Oct 1944, estimated 5,000 American & 5,000 German casualties),
- Operation Market Garden (3,500 American, 6,500 British, and 4,000 - 8,000 German casualties).
- Other major offensives across the Line that did not include American forces, including the Battle of the Scheldt and the Battle of Moerbrugge, were Allied successes with few casualties and large numbers of German soldiers captured.

For years, the US government denied the losses suffered by American forces at the Siegfried Line. But in the early 1960s German films surfaced, forcing the USA to admit what really happened. Governments often seek to conceal mistakes, failure or losses during a war.

Hitler's Mysterious End

Adolf and Eva Hitler committed suicide on 30 April 1945 at the Führerbunker in Berlin. The consensus is that he shot himself while simultaneously biting into a cyanide capsule. Their corpses were doused with petrol in the Reich Chancellery garden just outside the bunker's emergency exit, and set alight as the Red Army advanced.

After the war Soviet troops destroyed the bunker and filled it with concrete, fearing that identifying its location might give neo-nazis and other extremists a possible rallying point. Likewise the partially cremated corpse was dug up from its initial burial site and secretly buried at a compound in Magdeburg, E Germany.

In April 1970, when this facility was to be turned over to the E German government, the remains were reportedly exhumed and thoroughly cremated. But their ultimate fate was shrouded in mystery. According to the Russian Federal Security Service, a fragment of human skull stored in its archives

and displayed in a 2000 exhibition came from Hitler's remains and is all that remains of him. But its authenticity has been challenged by many.

German authorities officially released the location of Hitler's bunker in June 2006. So, while much about Hitler's death is now known or agreed, for years after WW2 the USSR and E Germany kept most details a mystery to deprive neo Nazis of a rallying point.

Vision Three (Completely fulfilled)

The third vision showed that, though there were three "isms", Fascism, Nazism, Communism, the first two would come to nothing but Communism would flourish. The voice admonished him to keep his eyes on Russia concerning future involvements, for Fascism and Nazism would end up in Communism.

Retelling of the 1933 vision

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, I said, 'Now, there's going to be three great isms. Which is now in existence. One of them is in Rome, which is--is Fascism, and one of them is in Germany which is Nazi--Nazism. And the other one is in Russia, which is communism ... they'll all beat at one another, until they'll finally wind up in one ism. And I predict that that will be communism.'
(See, Faith Once Delivered To The Saints, 1955, for the full text of this prophecy.)

The third vision was in the realm of world politics for it showed me that there would be three great ISMS, Fascism, Nazism, Communism, but that the first two would be swallowed up into the third. The voice admonished, "WATCH RUSSIA, WATCH RUSSIA. Keep your eye on the King of the North. (Taken from Chapter 9 of the Church Ages Book (the Laodicean Church Age))

The 3 "isms" of 1933

- **Fascism** was invented by Mussolini. It was an authoritarian ideology with the individual inferior to the state. (*Fasces*, a bundle of rods tied around an axe, was an ancient Roman symbol of the authority of the civic magistrates, symbolising strength through unity.)
- **Nazism** was a loose collection of ideas centred on anger at the perceived humiliation of Germany at the end of WW1 focussing on those held to blame for Germany's weakness. It combined anti-parliamentarianism, ethnic nationalism, racism, collectivism, eugenics, anti-Semitism, opposition to economic and political liberalism, a racially-defined and conspiratorial view of capitalism, and anti-communism. As Nazism became dominant in Germany, it was defined as whatever was decreed by the Nazi Party and Hitler.
- **Communism** was devised by Marx and effected by Lenin after the 1917 Russian Revolution. It seeks a classless society based on common ownership of the means of production.

The first two "isms" come to nothing

- **The Fall of Fascism:** In July 1943, there was a coup against Mussolini, and in September Italy surrendered to the Allies. But Germany immediately invaded and for nearly two years the country was divided, with a puppet fascist state under Mussolini in the Nazi-occupied north. On April 28, 1945, Italian communist partisans executed Mussolini.
- **The Fall of Nazism:** The tide of WW2 turned at the Battle of Stalingrad. The German army retreated until the Red Army occupied Berlin on May 8, 1945 and Germany surrendered.

The Hint of the end of the USSR

- In 1933, The Voice in the vision admonished to "Watch RUSSIA". Not 'the Soviet Union', but "Russia". Was this a hint of the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Russia?
- In the mid 1980s, the reform-minded Gorbachev introduced glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) to modernise Soviet communism. This provoked strong resentment among conservatives. In August 1991 an unsuccessful coup attempt to remove Gorbachev led instead to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Yeltsin came to power and declared the end of Communist rule. The USSR splintered into 15 independent republics, including Russia, and was officially dissolved in December 1991.

Vision Four (Being fulfilled)

The fourth vision predicted tremendous technological advances right after the war. An egg shaped car with a plastic bubble roof was seen on beautiful highways completely under remote control. There was no steering wheel and the occupants appeared to be playing a game like checkers.

Retelling of the 1933 vision

Science will progress in such a way until they will make a car that will not have to be guided by a steering wheel, and the cars will continue to be shaped like an egg until the consummation," the end time. I seen American family going down the road in a broad way, riding in a car with their backs turned towards where the wheel should be; looked like they were playing checkers or cards. And we got it. It's on television. "Popular Science"--"Mechanics," rather, all have it; we got the car. It's controlled by remote control by--by radar. They won't even have to have any steering wheel in it. Just set your dial like this--like you dial your phone--your car takes you right on to it, can't wreck nor nothing. No other cars--the magnet keeps the rest of them away from you. See? They got it. Oh, my. Think of it. Predicted thirty years before it happened. (Seventy Weeks of Daniel, 6/8/1961)

You won't be able to enter into a city then, a twenty-mile zone, you can just go twenty mile. You can't hit another car, because it's remote control. (Why are we not a Denomination? 27/9/1958)

Just set your radar to where you're going, it takes you yourself; you don't have to steer it. (Ephesian Church Age, Dec 5, 1960)

How likely did this seem in 1933?

Such a vehicle has been around for years, awaiting only highways fitted for such transport. The following quotes and developments show how close we now are to complete fulfilment of this vision. If so, with the 5th and 6th visions also in process of fulfilment, how close is the 7th and final vision?

Driverless Vehicles

With driver assist technologies being integrated into modern vehicles, a fully autonomous vehicle, on all or designated roadways, is possible. Research for such vehicles began in 1977 by the Tsukuba Mechanical Engineering Lab in Japan. The Bundeswehr Universität München experimented with video-driven cars in the 1980s and the USA with an automated highway system in the 1990s. But today the most promise lies in autonomous vehicles through advances in computer technology.

Quotes anticipating such vehicles:

- *With radar-based automatic distance-sensing systems, imaging & lane-adherence technology, and the GPS system, we basically have the enablers to do fully autonomous driving. It's not out of the question to imagine that someday soon you'll be able to start the car, punch in the appropriate settings, **then swivel the front seats around and play cards** and eat lunch as if you're riding on a train....If pressed to estimate just how far away that time is, I'd say a working system is ten years out, implementation maybe 20 years ([Fortune Magazine, June 14, 2004](#), Bob Lutz, Vice Chairman of General Motors)*
- *This is not science fiction... You're looking at the issues of congestion, safety, energy & emissions. Technically there should be no reason why we can't transfer to a totally different world."([Yahoo News, Jan 7, 2008](#), Larry Burns, VP of R&D for General Motors)*
- *Bit by bit, the day is coming when it will be possible to jump into an empty car and say: "Home, James." ([The Economist, Dec 11, 2008](#))*
(Cp <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21576384-cars-have-already-changed-way-we-live-they-are-likely-do-so-again-clean-safe-and-it>)

Examples of actual vehicles of this type:

- Parkshuttle bus, developed by [Frog Navigation \(2getthere\)](#) and built by Connexion (the Dutch Transit Authority), runs driverless by onboard computers and sensors, with guiding magnets embedded in the designated roadway between the airport and an industrial park. It does occasionally need to be manually overridden by a driver.

- An S-Class Mercedes with all the extras can already be left largely alone to make its way along a moderately busy and fairly straight Autobahn. ([The Economist, Dec 11, 2008](#))
- Volvo's new XC60 sport-utility vehicle...[is] fitted with mechanisms to help avoid a crash in the first place, including an automated braking system. The Volvo system, called City Safety, operates at up to 30kph (19mph)... City Safety uses a laser sensor fitted behind the windscreen to scan the road ahead, calculating relative speeds and distances. It applies the brakes if a collision cannot be avoided. ([The Economist, Dec 11, 2008](#))
- We could deliver a car to your office [near Tower Bridge] that could drive to Bristol. The technology exists; the problem is liability if there is an accident. [Times Online, 12/8/2009](#)
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/8377030.stm>: driverless driving on the motorway
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/8349923.stm> linking cars by sensors investigated
- Google has been testing a car that can drive itself: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/news/technology-11508351>; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-17989553>

The U.S. military has a mandate to have 30% of all vehicles unmanned by 2015. The Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) sponsors competitions to achieve this goal.

- In October 2005 a modified VW Touareg beat 23 other robotic cars and 150 miles of Nevada Desert to claim a \$2m prize and the rights to be called the first autonomous off-road vehicle. It is guided by video, laser, radar and GPS signals, run by 7 on-board Intel Pentiums, and able to tell the difference between a tumbleweed and a rock. A team at Stanford University invented it. Visit the [GrandChallenge](#) website for more details.
- In November 2007, the Tartan Racing Team bested this in a 60-mile mock urban course. These vehicles had to navigate traffic (each other and stunt drivers) and obey all California's traffic laws. DARPA handed out prizes totalling \$3.5m.

Egg shaped Cars

- Driverless, egg-shaped "cars" at Heathrow airport from Terminal 5 to the car park from 2011.
- Appearing at the 2005 Tokyo Auto Show, the Nissan Pivo concept is an electric car with drive-by-wire systems and a revolving egg-shaped cabin. (See Nissan [Press Release](#) for details.)
- Two large wheels drive the Peugeot Moovie concept vehicle, the centre of which serves as doors for the vehicle. It is an electric car developed as a prototype.

Vision Five (Being fulfilled)

The fifth involved the womanhood of the world. It showed her rapid moral decay. From the time she received the right to vote, she soon began to wear clothes that were too revealing. She cut her hair short and adopted men's clothing. Finally the vision showed her all but stripped naked, merely covering herself with a tiny apron about the size and shape of a fig leaf. With her womanhood so little valued, a terrible decay of all flesh came upon the earth and with it perversion even as set forth by the Word of God.

Retelling of the 1933 vision

The fifth vision had to do with the moral problem of our age, centring mostly around women. God showed me that women began to be out of their place with the granting of the vote. Then they cut off their hair, which signified that they were no longer under the authority of a man but insisted on either equal rights, or in most cases, more than equal rights. She adopted men's clothing and went into a state of undress, until the last picture I saw was a woman naked except for a little fig leaf type apron. With this vision I saw the terrible perversion and moral plight of the whole world. (Taken from "The Church Age Book", Chapter 9)

Just as the 4th vision dealt with scientific developments (represented by a car) after 1933, the 5th deals with moral developments.

The moral decay of America and the world was clearly seen in developments among women, who would:

- cut their hair, the symbol of their being under the headship of man (See 1Cor 11:2-16),
- dress like men (See Deut 22:5), and

- wear progressively immodest clothes (cp 1Tim 2:9) until finally they almost completely abandon their garments (cp Rev 3:18).

How likely was this in 1933 USA? Chastity and modesty were seen as positive traits. How different today.

USA in the period before the vision

- **Prior to WWI**, a lady's skirt often indicated her age - knee length for pre-teens, ankle length for early teens and floor length for 18+. Society and government protected innocence and virginity. Chaperoning was common and virginity of the mind deemed as important as that of the body. Even those with bare arms, low neckline and a corset-bound body, did not cut or shorten their hair. On the beaches, men and women were segregated. Females wore bloomers, blouse and black stockings. US laws limited the exposure of flesh (including legs).
- **1920s (Post-WWI and pre-Depression)**: Soon after being granted the vote, short hair became popular. "Flappers" popularised cigarettes, alcohol and disdain for decency among women. Cinemas became popular, and film stars began to influence youth with their styles, morals and make-up. Women's beachwear was now a figure hugging wool knit similar to the earlier men's.

USA in the period of the vision

- **The 1930s Great Depression** saw the return of more modest fashions. Skirts were lengthened to the ankles and the immoral films of the 1920's curtailed. But Hollywood influence grew. Marlene Dietrich and Katharine Hepburn helped make trousers acceptable for women.

USA in the period after the vision

- **WW2**: Women working in factories led to trousers becoming normal. Pin-ups became popular, glorifying the female form.
- **1950s**: Girls typically wore a wide mid-calf length skirt and modest top. In 1957, Brigitte Bardot, the film star popularised bikinis as beachwear. Hollywood introduced the miniskirt.
- **1960s & 1970s**: There was a widespread youth rebellion with music as the biggest influence. All taboos and restraints went. Another sexual revolution began, well beyond the flappers of the 1920s, with free sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll. Miniskirts became popular, abortion was legalised and girls given the right to birth control without parental consent.
- **1980s - 1990s**: Multiple partners were considered normal for teenage girls; birth control was widely used and easily available.
- **21st C**: America has become desensitised to sex and exposure. Women have progressively uncovered themselves, from top to middle to bottom. Even such clothing as is worn is as revealing, tight and provocative as possible. Nothing shocks except the idea that such liberty is immoral. Virginity for unmarried women is deemed a sign of weakness.

As with the 4th vision, this too is well on the way to complete fulfilment.

Vision Six (Being fulfilled)

A most beautiful woman arose in the US clothed in splendour. Great power was given to her. She was lovely of feature but there was a hardness about her that defied description. Beautiful as she was, she was yet cruel, wicked and cunning. She dominated the land with her authority, with complete power over the people. The vision indicated either such a woman would literally arise or that this woman was merely a type of an organisation Scripturally characterised by a female. Though the voice did not speak and reveal who she was, he felt in his heart this woman represented the rising Roman Catholic Church, and inserted in parenthesis at the end of this vision that he had written out, (*perhaps the Catholic church*).

Retelling of the 1933 vision

And I said, "Remember, in that day, before the end time comes, before the end time comes, that a woman... Now, you all keep this wrote down. There'll be a great powerful woman raise up, either be President, or dictator, or some great powerful woman in this United States. And she'll sink under the influence of women. Now, you remember; that's THUS SAITH THE LORD. (See Why Are We Not A Denomination for the full text of this prophecy.)

Then in the sixth vision there arose up in America a most beautiful, but cruel woman. She held the people in her complete power. I believed that this was the rise of the Roman Catholic Church, though I knew it could possibly be a vision of some woman rising in great power in America due to a popular vote by women. (Taken from Chapter 9 of the Church Ages Book (the Laodicean Church Age))

In this vision, William Branham was unsure whether the "Woman" which came to great power and authority was a physical woman, or a religious organisation such as the Catholic Church.

Since 1933, both women and Catholic Church have grown in political influence and authority in USA.

Political Rise of Woman in America

- In 1933 (coincidence?), Frances Perkins became the first female member of the US Cabinet.
- Since 1933, women have increased their presence in blue-collar jobs, broken the corporate glass ceiling, and shattered the stained glass ceiling of most religions in America.
- In 1984 Geraldine Ferraro ran unsuccessfully as the Democratic nominee for Vice President.
- In 2006, Nancy Pelosi became speaker of Congress, and second in line of Presidential succession after the Vice President.
- Hillary Clinton campaigned to become the first woman Democratic candidate for President in the 2008 presidential election.
- Republican Presidential nominee John McCain chose Sarah Palin as his nominee for Vice President in the 2008 presidential election.

Numerical and Political Rise of the Catholic Church in America

- In 1783, at the end of the American Revolution, less than 1% were Catholic.
- In 1850, New York Archbishop John Hughes said:
Everybody should know that we have for our mission to convert the world- including the inhabitants of the United States- the people of the cities, and the people of the country, the Officers of the Navy and the Marines, commander of the Army, the legislatures, the Senate, the Cabinet, the President and all.
- By 1910, 16% were Catholic due to French Canadian and European immigration.
- In 1926, one million Catholics gathered for the 28th International Eucharist Congress. It was seen as a "kind of formal debut for the American Church"
- In 1928 the running of Catholic Al Smith for President sparked alarm among Protestants. His defeat was widely seen as a rejection of his religion.
- In 1960, the first Catholic president, John F Kennedy, was elected. He sought to distance himself from the Catholic Church to reassure Protestants.
- In January 1984 the USA and the Holy See established diplomatic relations.
- By 2006, 69m Americans (23%) were Catholic. The largest Protestant denomination, the Southern Baptists, had 16.3m members.
- In 2008 President Bush eclipsed Kennedy's links with Rome. He enthusiastically welcomed Pope Benedict XVI during his April 15-20 visit to the USA. A Washington Post discussion of the extent of Catholic influence on American policy concludes that Bush had wedded Catholic intellectualism with evangelical political savvy to forge a powerful electoral coalition and that the key to understanding Bush's domestic policy is to view it through the lens of Rome. Rick Santorum, Catholic and Former Pennsylvania Senator, said, "*I don't think there's any question about it, [George Bush] is much more Catholic than Kennedy.*"

For a detailed examination of the remarkable change in the attitude of Protestants (in particular evangelicals and Pentecostals) towards the Catholic Church in the USA, see the Appendix.

Vision Seven (Future)

The voice bade him look once more. As he turned and beheld, a great explosion rent the entire land, and left America a smouldering, chaotic ruin. As far as the eye could see there was naught but craters, smoking piles of debris, and no humanity in sight. The vision then faded away.

Soon after the June 1933 vision, on 12 September, Leó Szilárd conceived the idea of the nuclear chain reaction in Bloomsbury, England.

Coincidence?

APPENDIX

Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Charismatics & Rome in USA since the 1960s

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3. Conclusion

Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Charismatics & Rome in USA since the 1960s

There is a spirit at work causing a growing desire for rapprochement with Rome.

That the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948 initiated much ecumenical activity among liberals and modernists is no surprise. What *is* surprising is the dramatic change in the evangelical/ pentecostal perception of Rome since the late 1950s.

Until 1956, it was seen as the harlot church, and its head the antichrist who would head up the coming one world church.

None would have even suspected, let alone warned, of what was to come.

But one man saw it and prophetically warned of it, William Branham.

Clayt Sonmore, a founder of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship (FGBMF), has written a series on pentecostal/charismatic developments since the 1950s in the USA. According to him, in 1958 William Branham told him privately that Billy Graham, Oral Roberts and the pope would be the key figures in bringing evangelicals together with the ecumenical movement and hence with Rome. Pentecostals/ charismatics would be led primarily by Roberts and non-pentecostals primarily by Graham, who would one day publicly honour the pope.

Sonmore also said that William Branham predicted:

- pentecostal/charismatic participation in Rome before the charismatic move was formed.
- Pentecostals and Catholics, both using the name charismatic, would sit side by side, bringing in the coming world church.
- the future role of the charismatic ecumenical renewal (CER) in paving the way for the coming of the false prophet and hence the antichrist.
- the Antichrist would be the last pope, the foremost political/religious leader in history, gaining full control over all nations, politically, economically and religiously.
- Rome would first gain religious control, then political.
- the means whereby Rome would gain control of Christendom, including evangelicals and pentecostals, would be primarily the CER.
- the Roman Church would be given new life through Billy Graham and Oral Roberts.
- significant future events and the roles of scores of charismatics and pentecostals in the rise of the false prophet. (Some roles did not reach centre stage until 1986 – 1992). Sonmore claims that since 1956, and especially since 1986, almost all these predictions have been fulfilled.
- the false prophet would be a highly influential ecumenical figure who would arise from within what would come to be known as the charismatic/pentecostal renewal.
- at the end of the Pentecostal age, charismatic Protestantism would be the main tool of the false prophet to give life to the (Protestant) image of the beast (which he often identified as Catholicism)

In 1963 William Branham stated publicly, "Watch these three men," (i.e. Graham, Roberts and the Pope). Through ecumenism they would hasten the bridging of the gap between evangelicals and Rome, thus greatly adding to the power of the papacy, which he said was the seat and person of Antichrist.

Let us look more closely at the rise in the influence of Rome among US evangelicals and Pentecostals, including the roles played by Graham and Roberts.

1. US Evangelicals and Rome

The Role of Billy Graham

As William Branham said, much of the current theological confusion over Catholicism can be laid at the feet of one man, Billy Graham. He more than any other is responsible for leading evangelicals closer to Rome. He has:

- received an honorary degree from Belmont Abbey, the Roman Catholic institution where he first appeared in 1963. (The Executive Vice President of the Abbey stated that Graham “has been more Catholic than otherwise and his theology is most acceptable to Catholics”, and that “he could bring Catholics and Protestants together in a healthy ecumenical spirit”.) In his address on receiving the degree, Graham said, “The gospel that built this school and the gospel that brings me here is still the way to salvation.”
- sought the co-operation of Catholic leaders in his metropolitan campaigns.
- sent converts of his meetings back to Roman Catholic churches.
- publicly honoured and praised Roman Catholic leaders.
- failed to warn of the terrible and unbiblical doctrines of Rome.

In 1964, Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston stated, “I am encouraging Catholics to attend his meeting. There is absolutely nothing in his message to hurt a Catholic’s belief. We have studied him for years. No Catholic can do anything but become a better Catholic.” In a S America crusade, the local Catholic bishop stood on the platform and blessed those who responded to the appeal.

Some statements by Graham in date order:

"I find myself closer to Catholics than the radical Protestants. I think the Roman Catholic Church today is going through a second Reformation"
Evening Bulletin, Philadelphia, May 1966

"I do believe that something happens at the baptism of an infant... we cannot fully understand the mysteries of God, but I believe that a miracle can happen in these children so that they are regenerated, that is, made Christian through infant baptism."
Lutheran Standard, October 1967

"I am far more tolerant of other kinds of Christians than I once was. My contact with Catholic, Lutheran and other leaders—people far removed from my own Southern Baptist tradition—has helped me, hopefully, to move in the right direction. I've found that my beliefs are essentially the same as those of orthodox Roman Catholics. For instance, they believe in the Virgin Birth, and so do I. They believe in the Resurrection of Jesus and the coming judgement of God, and so do I. We only differ on some matters of later church tradition."
McCall's Magazine, January 1978

"Pope John Paul II is one of the greatest moral and spiritual leaders of this century. He is an evangelist."
Saturday Evening Post, January - February 1980

"In the short time he has been pope, John Paul II has become the moral leader of the world."
Minneapolis (EP)

"World travel and getting to know clergy of all denominations has helped old me into an ecumenical being. We're separated by theology and, in some instances, culture and race, but all that means nothing to me any more."
U.S. News & World Report. December 1988

Since Graham sees no problem in fellowship with the Rome, and since his influence is very great among evangelicals, is it any wonder others have followed his lead?

For example, Bible/Prophecy teacher, Jack Van Impe.

He has become a strong apologist for the Catholic Church. He tells how in the 1980s God freed him from his formerly "bigoted" and "separatist" mentality:

"For years I was very bigoted and I knew every separatist text there was. Ro 16:17, 'Avoid them,' 2 Cor 6:14, 'Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,' 2 Jn 8, 'If there comes any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God's speed.' And I attacked many wonderful Christians, many wonderful Catholic Christians, and those in other groups. But about 15, 16 years ago, the Holy Spirit broke my heart to show me how wrong this all was, that all Christians from all denominations, including our wonderful Catholic brothers and sisters, are members of that one body, for by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, 1 Cor 12:13; that we're all members of the bride of Christ, Rev 19:7; and our God is not a polygamist, having two brides, two wives, Catholics and Protestants, but we are one.

And I saw Ps 133:1, 'Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' And I saw the prayer of Jesus in John 17:21 where He said, 'Father, I will that they all might be one, that the world might believe that You sent Me.' And I saw the command of God in Ephesians 4:3-6, where it says we are to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, for there is one body and one Spirit. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who's above all and through all and in you all.

God started to change me. I remember our papers in my separatist movement, how they constantly attacked Billy Graham because of his love for Catholics. One time they tore him apart, because Billy said, 'the cross on the Catholic Church is the same cross that I have on my Protestant church.' And I said, 'How can Billy Graham sleep at night.' Oh, the bitterness that they heave out against this man. But that man changed me and I saw that love. And then I appreciated the Southern Baptist Convention, because Billy was one of the members of their group, and they never once objected to his proclaiming love for Catholics and all of God's children."

The Jack Van Impe Show, January 27 1999

Van Impe said it was the love he saw in Graham that changed him. The same spirit that influenced Graham to accept Rome influenced Van Impe.

How many others have been similarly influenced?

Let us look at further at the growing acceptance of Rome among evangelicals.

"Evangelicals & Catholics Together", 1994

The growing acceptance of Rome by evangelicals was highlighted on March 29, 1994 when leading US Evangelicals and Catholics signed a joint declaration: "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the 3rd Millennium."

One man called it 'the most significant event in almost 500 years of Church history.' It was of supreme importance as an effort to "bury the hatchet", ignore centuries-old theological differences, and work together instead of as antagonists.

But did it effectively overturn the Reformation, preparing the way for absorption of Protestants by Rome?

The N Y Times said:

"They toiled together in the movements against abortion and pornography, and now leading Catholics and evangelicals are asking their flocks for a remarkable leap of faith: to finally accept each other as Christians. In what's being called a historic declaration, evangelicals including Pat Robertson and Charles Colson joined with conservative Roman Catholics leaders today in upholding the ties of faith that bind the nation's largest and most politically active religious groups. They urged Catholics and evangelicals...to stop aggressive proselytisation of each other's flocks."

(Proselytism, or winning converts from other professed Christian churches, is a burning issue for Rome. It has lost literally millions from her heartlands in the post war period, mainly to the pentecostals.)

Whilst each step by Catholic delegates was continuously monitored and approved by the Vatican, those Protestants who were not involved knew nothing about it until unveiled.

Who signed?

One of the chief architects was Richard John Neuhaus, a former Lutheran convert to Catholicism. In explaining his defection, he stated, "the purpose of proclaiming justification through faith, which seemed in the 16th C to necessitate a division, no longer warrants division."

John White, former president of the National Association of Evangelicals, said it was a "triumphalistic moment in American religious life after centuries of distrust." Other evangelical signers included Bill Bright (Campus Crusade), Charles Colson (President of Prison Fellowship), Os Guinness, Richard Land & Larry Lewis (Southern Baptist officials), Jesse Miranda (leader in the Assemblies of God), Richard Mouw (President, Fuller Theological Seminary), Mark Noll (Wheaton University), J Packer (noted British author), Pat Robertson (TV preacher and evangelical political leader) and Herbert Schlossberg.

What did it say?

The document does acknowledge some differences. But not the most important: what it means to be a Christian. In fact, it denies such a difference exists.

This compromise lies at the heart of the agreement. It attempts to broaden the definition of "Christian" to include as many outside the evangelical camp as possible: Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants.

It mainly concerns Catholic/evangelical relationships and laments the division between them.

The key element is the previously unthinkable admission by Evangelicals that active participation in the Catholic Church makes one a Christian. If so, the Reformation was a tragic mistake and multitudes murdered by Rome died in vain. It argues that Catholics are true believers along with evangelicals since both accept the Apostles' Creed. How acceptance of the Creed makes one a Christian is not explained. Acceptance and fellowship between evangelicals and Catholics is justified since both believe in salvation by grace. But for Rome, grace is mediated through the sacraments administered by a priest. The Biblical concept is unmerited favour received by faith alone. There is a vast difference.

The Declaration proposes an end to Catholic/evangelical conflict and "sheep stealing". "It is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community to proselytise among active adherents of another". In other words, it proposes we no longer seek to win unsaved Catholics as they are already Christians! The impact upon evangelism and world-wide missions is readily apparent.

Why such a change?

How did respected evangelical leaders reach such conclusions, departing from time-honoured positions?

- **Common political causes:** In recent years Catholics and evangelicals have made common cause in the political arena, over abortion, homosexuality, etc. These brought together leaders

who had never worked together previously. Friendships have been formed, and serious doctrinal differences downplayed. Since there is agreement on some social issues, many have been willing to minimise doctrinal differences to cooperate in "saving America."

- **The charismatic factor:** Some signers said that what brought the two together was the charismatic movement. Charismatics find common ground in their shared experience and see no doctrinal impediment to full co-operation. They seem able to span the widest theological gulf without difficulty. (More later on the impetus toward ecumenism generated by the charismatic movement.)

US Evangelical and Charismatic Leaders meet the Pope, 1995

Charismatic Pat Robertson (CBN and the 700 Club), Bill Bright (Campus Crusade for Christ) Chuck Colson (Prison Fellowship Ministries) and Don Argue (president, NAE) were among leaders who met Pope John Paul II during his visit to New York on October 7, 1995.

Later that day, Robertson and Bright participated in a papal mass. According to the Religious News Service, Robertson marched at the head of an ecumenical procession to the papal altar. New York Cardinal O'Connor arranged Robertson's seat of honour at the Mass with Bright next to Robertson.

The meeting of a large number of evangelical leaders with the Pope and the participation of some in a papal mass is historic.

Robertson said of the Pope: "He's got great humility and spirituality; that's what people admire about him." The *New York Times* reported: "Overall, Mr Robertson said the spirit of the meeting was one of interreligious unity. 'There was a real sense of harmony,' he said. 'We all admire the Holy Father tremendously. We all want to build bridges with the Catholic Church.'"

Other Examples

Other illustrations of the blurring of the boundaries between evangelicals and Rome are found in:

- **YWAM**, an international, inter-denominational Christian missionary organisation founded in 1960
- **The Promise Keepers**, founded 1992; a conservative organisation originating in the USA and one of the largest Christian movements today
- **The Manhattan Declaration** on Marriage, Religious Liberty and Life, 2009, by about 150 evangelical, Catholic and Orthodox leaders who came together in support of the sanctity of human life, the dignity of marriage and the rights of conscience and religious liberty.

Concerning YWAM (<http://www.powertostand.com/YWAM/whiyamywam.htm>), it seems its ecumenical unions with Catholics were longstanding:

- At YWAM's 25th anniversary celebration in the late 90s at Calvary Chapel Honolulu, according to one attendee, Loren Cunningham, YWAM's founder, said something like "We've been commended by the Pope for our great work among Catholic youth."
- Today YWAM has "Kerygma Teams" working in ecumenical union with charismatic Catholics. (e.g. "Kerygma Teams is a worldwide network of leaders, teams, and ministries committed to training and mobilising young lay Protestants and Catholics into evangelisation, youth ministry, and short- and long-term cross-cultural missions projects", <http://ireland.kteams.org/>) How can they deny a distinction between Rome and the Word?

As for Promise Keepers, many became involved because of its encouragement for men to take the leadership in homes, churches and communities. But even at the beginning there were warning signs.

Its founder, Bill McCartney, was a devout Catholic until he began attending Boulder Vineyard Fellowship. Yet he never publicly made a clean break with Catholicism.

Not only that, practising Catholics are PK staff members and Catholic priests speak at their rallies. In fact, four years after founding PK, in a 1997 interview with a Catholic magazine, McCartney admitted Catholic participation was his aim from the beginning:

"Back in 1992, at our first stadium event, we very clearly stated from the podium that we eagerly welcomed the participation of Roman Catholics, and we've had scores of Roman Catholics attend and go back to their churches excited." (Our Sunday Visitor, 20/7/97; p 10)

PK supporters say McCartney wants Catholics to attend to hear the true gospel. But is that so? The following is from a 2001 interview of McCartney by Knight Ridder News Service:

KRNS: What parts of your Catholic upbringing do you hold onto?

McCartney: I know many Catholics love God with all their heart. I have genuine respect for anyone who truly has given their life to Christ.

KRNS: Do you see yourself as having been 'converted' from Catholicism?

McCartney: I had a born-again experience at the age of 33. And as a result of that I found a church to fellowship in where I felt I was being fed properly. I don't say that as a reflection on Catholicism. But once I was born again, I got an evangelical spirit.

KRNS: Do you consider the Catholic Church to be a legitimate Christian church?

McCartney: Of course.

By saying Rome is a legitimate Christian church, McCarthy implies Catholics hear the true gospel there.

2. US Pentecostals, Charismatics & Rome

If the change in the attitude to Rome among large segments of the US evangelical world was a surprise, the change among US Pentecostals was even more so.

A key factor in the advance of the spirit of ecumenical compromise was the birth of the Charismatic Ecumenical Renewal (CER) movement in June 1956.

1956: Origin of the Charismatic Ecumenical Renewal (CER)

Most date the origin of the CER to events in 1959/60 in an Episcopal church in Van Nuys, California when Dennis Bennett began to speak with tongues. After this, by 1975 almost every US denomination had a charismatic wing.

But it is dated several years earlier by Clayt Sonmore, an active participant of the revival of the late 1940s and the 1950s, a founder member of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship (FGBMF), and author of a series of books on pentecostal/charismatic developments since the 1950s

According to Sonmore, it began at the third FGBMF convention on 27 June 1956. Attendees included Tommy Hicks, Oral Roberts, David du Plessis and Demos Shakarian. At that meeting the three words charismatic, ecumenical and renewal were coined by three speakers.

Until then,

- ***Charismatic*** in dictionaries at that time did not describe a religious experience.
- ***Renewal*** was only used in the Biblical sense of the un wisdom of renewing old wineskins. But on this occasion it was used to describe how the current "charismatic" visitation would renew not just the Pentecostal but all Protestant churches.
- ***Ecumenical*** was virtually a swear word among evangelicals and pentecostals since its introduction in 1948 at the inception of the US National Council of Churches (NCC). David du Plessis, however, extended the expectancy of renewal beyond the Pentecostal churches giving it an ecumenical dimension in keeping with his meetings with many top NCC and World Council of Churches (WCC) leaders.

The three terms were then joined together (Charismatic Ecumenical Renewal) by a fourth speaker to describe the new thing they believed God was about to do.

William Branham, a scheduled speaker at the 1956 meeting, left the platform in protest.

Influenced by David du Plessis, who had introduced the ecumenical movement to Pentecostals, the rapidly growing FGBMF became a prime mover in the world-wide spread of the CER.

Several came out of the FGBMF as a result.

At the 1956 meeting, the extension of the renewal to Catholicism was not mentioned. The Catholic charismatic movement did not begin until about 1967. Once it did begin, it too was embraced and advanced by the FGBMF. By 1987, many Catholics attended FGBMF meetings and some were officers.

But we are running ahead of ourselves. Let us look at the role in the spread of the CER of the Pentecostal healing evangelist, Oral Roberts, and then the rise of the Catholic charismatic movement.

These two influences led to the unthinkable, a bridging of the great gulf between Pentecostals and Rome.

The Role of Oral Roberts

According to Sonmore, in 1958 William Branham told him privately that evangelicals would come together with the ecumenical movement and hence with Rome. Pentecostals/charismatics would be led primarily by Oral Roberts.

Let us see how this came to pass.

According to Harrell in *Oral Roberts: An American Life*, writing of the period from 1960 to 1975:

- Roberts was the pre-eminent first leader of CER. He and Oral Roberts University (ORU) (dedicated by Billy Graham) promoted and co-ordinated it from 1960 to 1975. Roberts saw the charismatic renewal and himself as forerunners of the 2nd Coming, and ORU and his ministry as one of the centres of the world charismatic movement.
- The most important promoters of this movement were “unquestionably” Roberts, du Plessis and FGBMF founder, Demos Shakarian, key players in the fateful 1956 FGBMF convention.
- Roberts had close links with Shakarian who, through the rapidly growing FGBMF, was very effective in spreading the pentecostal message among the denominations. Both he and Roberts believed they had been raised up for this.
- (Du Plessis publicly affirmed that the FGBMF had bridged the gap between Pentecostals and mainliners. Catholic Kevin Ranaghan said that the greatest Pentecostal contribution to the Catholic charismatic renewal came from the FGBMF. Once again, Sonmore relates how William Branham foretold the role of the FGBMF.)
- Roberts assembled many Pentecostal leaders in the early 1960s to tell of his soon coming ORU. He also enthusiastically recounted the charismatic move in mainstream churches, and even before the Catholic renewal, “urged Pentecostals to **discard their anti-Catholic prejudices.**”
- Perhaps Roberts’ most direct contribution to spreading the CER in the early 1960s was a series of conferences. They brought together many pentecostal and non pentecostal ministers and laymen to discuss the move among the churches. This was probably the closest thing the then unstructured renewal had to planning sessions.
- As he became increasingly estranged from the Pentecostal denominations, Roberts promoted the renewal in other churches.
- Roberts was elated by the spread of the Catholic charismatic renewal. Its leaders spoke at ORU.

Later, in 1986, Roberts and others founded International Charismatic Bible Ministries (now wound up). Annual conventions were held at ORU. Its motto was “Unity and love through signs and wonders”. It was a group of charismatic leaders, with a commitment to work together in unity. Its purpose was to provide a broad range of spiritual, educational and professional benefits. The main benefit was seen as mutual fellowship and spiritual enrichment in conferences, sharing methods, revelations, prophecies and teachings in the fullness of the Holy Spirit; and personal encouragement from one minister to another.

But we are again running ahead. Let us look at the spread of the charismatic movement to Catholics.

1967: Rise of the Catholic Charismatic Movement

The rapidly developing CER soon caught the attention of Rome. Articles appeared in Catholic magazines suggesting members learn to exercise the gifts, sing emotional pentecostal songs and pray spontaneously to promote emotional religious activity. There were warnings of the Church’s demise if tongues and emotions were not integrated into Catholic traditions.

Then the Catholic Charismatic Movement burst onto the scene, influencing the whole CER. From 1966/67 to 1978 Catholic charismatics spread rapidly.

- Catholics first experienced the gifts of the Spirit in the manner of the Pentecostals at Duquesne in Pittsburgh in 1966/67 and Notre Dame in 1968.

- The first organised Catholic Charismatic renewal conference was at Notre Dame in 1967.
- Original leaders were laymen, including Kevin Ranaghan and Ralph Martin.
- By the 1970s, estimates of US Catholic charismatics varied between 200,000 and one million.

Initially hopes were aroused among evangelicals when many early Catholic charismatics began to search the Scriptures. One bishop even spoke of “perilous idolatry” after research on Mariology.

But the desire of the Catholic Charismatic leaders for official approval led to a fatal acceptance of official control. Leadership was surrendered to the control of the Nicolaitan Roman hierarchy.

And that hierarchy had been following developments from the beginning. A report to the November 1969 US Catholic bishops concluded that the movement should not be inhibited but allowed to develop. But, care was needed to involve prudent priests and to oversee and guide the movement *in the Church*. Others cautioned lest any individual become too popular or prominent and begin to vie with the authority of the hierarchy, being tempted to become independent.

Let us see how the hierarchy centralised control under itself and sought to use the Catholic Charismatic Movement to infiltrate the CER. The Aim? To bring Protestant “separated brethren” back to Rome.

***The Magisterium gains control of the Catholic Charismatic Movement:
The CER as the means of bringing Protestants back to Rome***

Volume II of Sonmore’s series on pentecostal/charismatic developments since the 1950s shows the goal of the Catholic Church to bring the CER under Catholic control.

He describes a meeting for Catholics that he attended in 1969 at the University of Minnesota. Fr Kilian McDonnell (appointed by the pope to head the Catholic Ecumenical Research Institute from 1963 - 1988) spoke of the benefits of the Catholic charismatic movement ***and its significance for Catholic ecumenical activity***.

Sonmore also gives a fascinating account of two private meetings he attended at the first two Notre Dame National (mainly Catholic) Charismatic conferences in 1971 and 1972. These comprised a very small minority of attendees, separate from the main conferences. The first seemed to be international clergy and lay leaders and the second high level hierarchy.

They discussed ***how the renewal could play a major, primary even, role in bringing “separated brethren” back to the “true” church***. The pope, curia and cardinals were very pleased with the direction of the Catholic renewal and the depth of penetration into Protestant ranks. After all, as Harrell says, in *Oral Roberts: An American Life*, the rapid growth of the Catholics renewal meant they “quickly became a powerful, ***if not dominating*** force within the broader charismatic movement”.

Some of the resultant strategy/guidelines were:

- Charismatic Catholics were to encourage all denominations to embrace charismatic gatherings, whilst pursuing a policy of instructing all to stay in their own denomination.
- If the total allegiance of Catholic charismatics to the mother church were compromised, they would be pressured to withdraw into their own communion.
- A major problem over potential Luthers and come-outers was feared, whether Catholic or Protestant. Care was needed to ensure no one charismatic figure gained too much influence in case he should call for a coming out. No one must gain a position of influence within the CER (Protestant or Catholic) without commitment to a covenant relationship, and to the creation of a one world church of love.
- In case of any problem, withdrawal from Protestant charismatics would be necessary, for a period.
- The withdrawal would last until Catholics were grounded in their traditions and loyalty to the pope.
- Once achieved, a planned ecumenical healing could take place.

- **The plan was** to co-operate until, by sheer numbers, and carefully regulated and co-mingled ecumenical meetings, Catholics could **take over the CER, and all separated brethren be brought back to the one true church.**
- The key theme was that **the CER was the primary tool to reverse what Luther began.**

In summary, the Vatican had two key aims:

1. For the Magisterium to gain full control of the Catholic Charismatic Movement; and
2. For a fully subjugated Catholic Charismatic Movement to become the prime vehicle to bring “separated brethren” in the CER back to Rome.

Following these meetings, from 1973 a new spirit entered the relationship between Catholic and Protestant charismatics. An initial attempt was made to use the Catholic renewal to win over Protestant charismatics to the Vatican strategy that had been decided in 1971 & 1972.

Catholic charismatic leaders invited them to hold their denominational leaders’ gatherings at Ann Arbor, and sought (unsuccessfully):

- to form organised denominational groupings;
- to consider joining a centralised effort with the Catholics;
- to make *New Covenant*, the Catholic charismatic magazine, the sole US official voice of the renewal, all others to cease publication;
- to subject all charismatic tapes/books to the approval of an interdenominational Censor Committee

Meanwhile, in 1972, a key figure arrived on the scene, Cardinal Suenens, archbishop of Brussel-Malines. He met the charismatic renewal for the first time on a visit to the USA and was immediately taken by it.

Suenens conferred with the Catholic renewal leadership in the USA (Ralph Martin, Steve Clark, Kevin Ranaghan, Fr Jim Ferry) and in Europe, and explained the renewal to the pope and the Curia. He also reminded the renewal leadership of the gifts of the Spirit which Rome claimed the church already had: the Eucharist, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the pope as visible centre of unity and the range of Catholic teaching and practice.

From 1974 to 1986 Suenens composed six guides to the renewal: Charismatic Renewal; Ecumenism and Charismatic Renewal (1978); Charismatic Renewal and Social Action (1979); and, Renewal and the Powers of Darkness, with a foreword by Cardinal Ratzinger (later, Benedict XV) (1982).

In 1975, on Suenens’ recommendation, the Catholic charismatic renewal was held its world congress at Rome. On Pentecost Sunday Pope Paul in St. Peter’s decisively accepted it into the Church. Suenens had won another battle. By patient dialogue he had led many in the charismatic renewal **to integrate their new enthusiasm into the faith and practice of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.**

But the price for recognition by Rome was heavy. Progressive subjugation of the Catholic charismatic renewal to the control of the hierarchy continued. Notice the pope’s words when he spoke of his approval and acceptance of the Catholic charismatic movement into the Church:

*This strong desire to situate yourselves **in the Church** is an authentic sign of the action of the Holy Spirit, for ... it is **in the Church** that the Spirit of Christ was communicated on the day of Pentecost when He came down upon the apostles gathered ... **with Mary...***

By 1977 there had been major developments:

- Suenens was designated overseer of the Catholic charismatic movement by the Vatican.
- In 1976 an office headed by Suenens took oversight of the Catholic renewal in USA and elsewhere via the different Catholic Charismatic National Service committees (NSCs). Its

director was Ralph Martin, one of the 3 top lay leaders of the US Catholic renewal. He moved to Brussels to work with Suenens, being joined later by Steve Clark, another of the 3.

- The December 1977 *New Covenant* explains the Church's official oversight of the US renewal via its NSC. The NSC's "pastoral concern" is **to "encourage the proper relationship of the movement to the church... The proper integration of the ... results of the ... renewal into the church ... requires careful attention to the order, tradition, doctrine and spirituality of the church..."**

The screws were tightening.

At the same time the strategy was paying off of using Catholic charismatic relationships with the CER to infiltrate and ultimately take over the CER. At the 1977 Kansas City National Charismatic Conference, Catholics came very close to controlling it, with 51% Catholic attendees and Catholic Kevin Ranaghan as co-chairman.

1978, Catholic Charismatics instructed to withdraw from the CER

But many Catholic charismatics were seriously considering salvation by grace and other Protestant doctrines. Rome feared another Luther-style exodus.

Rome's withdrawal strategy was finally triggered in 1978. A temporary withdrawal from most ecumenical activities was ordered to enable a thorough grounding of Catholic charismatics in Catholic traditions. The order came via Cardinal Suenens at a Catholic charismatic conclave in Ireland, immediately after visiting the pope on the matter.

Coming directly from Paul VI to the Conference on Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church in Ireland in June 1978, Suenens relayed the papal call for, **"love of the pope, loyalty to the bishops, commitment to exercise their ...role inside the church and above all to renew their pledge to remain loyal and faithful to the institutional church"** (*National Catholic Reporter*, Vol 14, No 34, 1978). He stated, "Some concern exists in the Vatican that the movement should not cause division in the church or become an alternative church." So, **"the Vatican and national hierarchies are taking care to keep the movement firmly within the institutional church"**. Attention was redirected from ecumenical unity to social action.

And the Pope meant business.

Catholic charismatics world-wide were instructed to dissolve non denominational prayer groups, withdrawing from fellowship with their Protestant counterparts, returning to church controlled fellowships.

- The November 1978, *New Covenant* carried an interview with the papal Apostolic Delegate to USA. He said authentic renewal movements "are renewals of the church, in the church and are submitted to the discernment of the bishops in communion with the pope." He advises the movement to stay close to the church, "to discern with the church", "under the guidance of the local and hierarchical leadership." He asks them to build strong links with the local diocese, and to "respect and cherish the Catholic tradition". Ecumenism cannot do without the church; **Jesus and the Bible are not enough.** How the Nicolaitan spirit betrays itself!
- In 1979, to appease Catholic critics, the format of a seminar manual was changed. Initially it had avoided denominational doctrinal differences. Now a separate Catholic edition was published, to ensure Catholics integrated their charismatic experience with the sacramental and devotional life of the church.
- In April 1979, the editor of *New Covenant* and a leader of the Word of God community at Ann Arbor announced the Ann Arbor ecumenical community (and ultimately all communities) would dissolve itself, in favour of 4 denominational fellowships (Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed and Free Church) under direct denominational jurisdiction. The idea had begun with a local priest, then the local bishop and Suenens, to relate Catholic members of the community to their local bishop. By January 1979, the Catholic fellowship was operational, with approval from Rome, operating under guidelines from Suenens. The local bishop's formal recognition was described as showing his **desire to "safeguard the Catholicity of Catholic members,"**

safeguarding the Catholic identity of members by providing instruction in Catholic tradition.

- Suenens' 1978 book, "Ecumenism & Charismatic Renewal", makes clear ***the Vatican strategy to safeguard the Catholic identity of all Catholic charismatics***. The April 1979 *New Covenant* review says the book was written to encourage ecumenism and also ***to warn against excesses that could "weaken or fragment the church."*** Whilst the renewal could revitalise the church, it must be guided by the accumulated wisdom of the church to prevent "withdrawal into sectarian isolation". Catholic charismatic community members must have regular access to the eucharist and receive adequate catechetical formation. Participation in nondenominational communities is to be discouraged. The book is commended as an aid to being faithful both to the renewal *and* the church.

Nicolaitanism had triumphed. The hierarchy/Magisterium rules.

- The Vatican instructs Suenens
- Suenens instructs Martin and Clark in Brussels
- Martin and Clark instruct *New Covenant*
- *New Covenant* instructs prayer group leaders
- Prayer group leaders instruct the people

Rome has much experience of incorporating and controlling renewal movements. This was not the first. Catholic charismatics were offered recognition and approval in exchange for submission to the Magisterium and its authority. Catholic charismatic leaders instructed non-denominational ecumenical prayer groups to dissolve, returning to church controlled denominational groupings. The respectability of official recognition was traded in for official control.

What a terrible price to pay!

Illuminating insights on the foregoing Vatican strategy were provided in 1979 by Hans Schnabel, editor of *CharisLife*, a Portland Lutheran charismatic magazine. As an active participant in early Protestant/ Catholic meetings, he was disturbed that after the seeming openness from 1967 to 1979, Catholic charismatics were suddenly pulling back from fellowship with Protestants. He had wondered at the growing demands that Catholics provide the main guidance and control in charismatic ecumenical endeavours as a price for continued Catholic co-operation. By 1979 he came to realise the hidden agendas of Rome.

***1987, The withdrawal reversed:
Renewed Catholic attempt to take over the whole CER***

This withdrawal of fellowship was not the end of the Vatican strategy to use the Catholic charismatic renewal as a tool to seek Protestant union with/submission to Rome. It was part of the strategy discussed at the private meetings in 1971/2. The overall goal remained the same. This was but a tactic, a temporary hiatus, and not an abandonment of the strategy.

Suenens expressed that goal in one of his last remarks before he retired in July 1979. At a Catholic/ Protestant charismatic Jesus 79 Pentecost rally, he spoke of his dream "to seek the ***visible*** unity of the church in the not-too-distant future." Let there be no doubt, to a Catholic that can mean nothing less than Protestant surrender to the hierarchy of Rome. It echoes his words in Ireland in 1978 that the temporary postponement of fellowship would ultimately lead to communion in the eucharist (i.e. full fellowship between Rome and the "separated brethren").

An attempt had failed in 1973 to use the Catholic renewal to achieve Vatican objectives among Protestant charismatics. Another attempt was to be made.

By 1987 it was felt that Catholic charismatics had been sufficiently grounded in their own traditions. The pre-planned withdrawal of Catholic charismatics from fellowship with Protestants was reversed. A big step was taken in the master plan to centralise charismatic control under Catholic headship and to bring the separated brethren back to the mother.

The go-ahead was given to freely mix again at the 22-26 July 1987 New Orleans N American Congress on the Holy Spirit & World Evangelisation.

They certainly played a prominent part:

- Of the 50,000 attendees, 51% were Catholics.
- Catholic charismatics were in close control. Priests played a key role in leadership and speaking. (Non Catholic speakers included Vinson Synan, Reinhard Bonkke and Kenneth Copeland.)
- The associated parade through New Orleans included dozens of banners venerating Mary. One said, "To Jesus thru Mary".

In the same year, a further aim of the strategy of the private 1971/72 meetings was achieved. There had been a failed attempt in 1973 to make the Catholic *New Covenant* the sole US official voice of the renewal. In 1987, however, the editor of *New Covenant* became editorial director of *Charisma*, the most influential US and world charismatic magazine, effectively achieving the same goal. Since then *Charisma* has manifested a strong and growing pro Catholic bias.

For example, the July 1995 issue. Its cover exclaims: "Catholics and Protestants: Can We Walk Together? Some leaders say it's time to focus on what unites us, not what divides us." A set of rosary beads is displayed prominently.

In the article, Pentecostal Vinson Synan says ***the CER has been at the forefront of bringing together Catholics and non-Catholics.***

"By 1960, Pentecostalism entered the mainline churches in a movement first called 'neo-Pentecostalism' and later 'charismatic renewal.' Emphasising the baptism and gifts of the Spirit, it became a de facto ecumenical movement spilling into all churches and affecting hundreds of millions of Christians. For the first time, millions of Catholics prayed with Christians of other traditions."

David du Plessis
&
The International Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue

The warning of William Branham

As with Billy Graham and Oral Roberts, William Branham warned of the role of David du Plessis in bringing evangelicals and Pentecostals back to Rome.

On 10 November 1963, he mentioned a du Plessis circular referring to the Second Vatican Council (then in session). He warned du Plessis was taking the church back to Babylon, just as he had forewarned 30 years before:

*"The Council of churches over there now that's meeting in Rome. This circular letter that my good friend, David du Plessis, when I set there and cried to him about it, at Fourteen Mile Creek, not long ago; not realising he swung the church right into Babylon, when everybody saying, "Oh, all the churches are going to be one now." Yeah, I know that, see, **just exactly what's wrote on my book of prophecy in 1933, that would take place.** Why, don't you realise that's Satan uniting together? The Bible says that. And just after a bit, just a little while, as soon as they become one, then the interdenominational is finished. See? There'll be your mark of the beast rise. See?"* (Souls in Prison Now, p 30:202).

That same evening, William Branham apologised for naming du Plessis. He said he did it out of concern. He feared that invitations from dignitaries at Princeton University and other places were affecting du Plessis' judgement. It was important to stay humble. Du Plessis ought to have better known the Word, that when the sleeping virgins try to get oil, they do not succeed. It is too late. Fine people feel that God is doing something, but often it is the devil. They want Pentecost for showmanship just as Herod with Jesus. Pentecost is going back to what it came out of, seeking ecumenical unity which will end in consolidation with Rome.

But how could Pentecostals join with Rome?!

Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue

Traditionally, there had been deep mistrust in Catholic/Pentecostal relations. Pentecostals did not accept the saving value of the Catholic Church or its sacraments. Rome was identified with Babylon in many minds. So, the very idea of serious official dialogue between Rome and Pentecostals seemed farfetched. Yet that is exactly what began in 1972, one of the most significant events in the post war religious scene.

Let us see how this came about, and the pivotal role of du Plessis.

Two key developments made it possible:

- the appearance of Catholic Charismatic Renewal
- **the participation of du Plessis, in the Second Vatican Council**, the only Pentecostal invited to the third session of the Council in Rome in 1964.

As mentioned earlier, the foremost promoters of the CER were “unquestionably” Roberts, du Plessis and FGBMF founder, Demos Shakarian. Roberts had close links with du Plessis, but whilst Roberts worked more with the masses, du Plessis worked with the decision makers.

In the early 1960s, du Plessis, one of the very few Pentecostals willing to talk to Rome, held meetings with the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Following Pope John XXIII’s call for a new Pentecost in the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council, they were looking deeply into the Holy Spirit.

As he did not belong to a Pentecostal denomination, du Plessis was ideal. There were strained relations between Pentecostal denominations and Rome, especially in S America. They trusted him as he believed that acceptance of the Pentecostal experience did not require a change of church affiliation. In 1959, for example, he had advised the Episcopalian Dennis Bennett not to leave his denomination following difficulties after first speaking with tongues.

According to the International Communion of Charismatic Churches, a body with great sympathy for Rome (<http://www.theiccc.com/aboutUs.html>), du Plessis was called upon by Pope Paul VI to create a Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue. Its aim was to foster understanding and **to make room within the Catholic Church for the many Catholics leaving for Pentecostal churches**. He thought that **by creating this partnership Catholics would be kept in the fold**.

Du Plessis was crucial in initiating dialogue. He contacted the president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, saying he believed dialogue could be established with Pentecostals. An agreement was signed in 1971. It inaugurated a 5-year International Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue with certain Protestant and Anglican charismatics along with Classical Pentecostal leaders and churches.

The idea was not popular with Pentecostals. An attempt by du Plessis to put the Dialogue on the agenda of the World Pentecostal Conference was unsuccessful. Even participants were at times reluctant to talk of their involvement, asking that their identity not be disclosed. Attendees sometimes participated on behalf of their denominations, and at others with their permission but in a personal capacity. The US Assemblies of God (AoG) discouraged its executives from participation. The Pentecostal team entered the second phase of the Dialogue (1977-1982) with very little support from major denominational leaders. "Within the Pentecostal and evangelical tradition, there's been a reticence to talk about dialogue with Catholics," says Cecil Robeck, Jr, an AoG minister and church history and ecumenics professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, who participated in the Dialogue from 1985.

The Dialogue would never have happened but for du Plessis and his counterpart, Father Kilian McDonnell. **Du Plessis was chief architect of the talks**, and also instrumental in their ongoing tone as the Pentecostal chairman over the next 10 years.

Co-chairmen were McDonnell and Du Plessis (later replaced by his brother Justus, then Cecil Robeck Jr).

At different times, Pentecostal attendees included F P Moller (head of the S Africa Apostolic Faith Mission), John Meares (founder of one of Washington's largest Pentecostal churches), Robert McAlister (leader of a major Pentecostal movement in Brazil and son of a former Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada General Superintendent), Jerry Sandidge (AoG), Ronald Kydd (PAOC), Cheryll Bridges Johns (Church of God, Cleveland), Steve Overman (International Church of the Foursquare Gospel), Thomas Pratt (AoG), Harold Hunter (International Pentecostal Holiness Church), Jackie Johns (Church of God, Cleveland), Marta Palma (Iglesia Mision Pentecostal, Chile), Raymond Pruitt (Church of God of Prophecy). Gary Matsdorf (International Church of the Foursquare Gospel) attended as an observer.

The 1st Phase (1972-76)

- It was agreed not to focus at this stage on church union, but on discovering what unity already existed, identifying points of division, and on deepening their knowledge of each other, overcoming misunderstandings and growing in mutual understanding and respect. (Du Plessis, in his newsletter, noted that things got easier after the first meeting as participants learned trust.)
- But the underlying quest for visible union was not far from the pope's mind when addressing the Pentecostal delegates at the end of this phase:

*We believe [the reality of God] establishes itself among the faithful **as a visible communion**, so that they are united not only by a spiritual relationship ... but **also on the visible level** ... It is **a communion expressed in the fellowship of the Church** which seeks always, according to our Lord's will, **to become perfect in unity**. How untiring all who love this Lord of ours must be in working to overcome all the causes of division and separation that still impede the fullness of this communion.*

- Topics covered included: Life in the Spirit & the Baptism in the Spirit; Pentecostal Spirituality; Historical background of Pentecostalism; the relation of Baptism in the Spirit to Baptism; the Spirit and the Gifts in church history; The Relation of the Action of the Spirit to Church Structures; Baptism; Psychological & Sociological Dimensions of Pentecostalism; Discernment of Spirits.

The 2nd Phase (1977-1982)

- After the first phase, the Vatican desired further meetings, but limited to classical Pentecostals, particularly including from the 3rd world, rather than mixed with charismatics.
- The Pentecostals wanted to discuss the relationship between Scripture, Tradition & the Magisterium; the interpretation of Scripture; the role of Mary; and Ministry. Other topics included Tongues in the Pentecostal Movement; the relationship between Faith & Experience; Healing.

Dialogue continued from 1976-1978 under Paul VI and briefly under John Paul II. According to the International Communion of Charismatic Churches, the new pope, while favourable to the Pentecostal experience, ended the dialogues **as he felt charismatic Catholics were abandoning the Roman Church in spite of efforts to create unity and keep them within the fold**. Additional problems caused by press reports on a talk by Sandidge on "A Pentecostal Perspective on Mary" reinforced the suspension

On 9 November 1983, John Paul II awarded the Benemerenti Medal to du Plessis for outstanding service to Christianity, the first time it had been given to a non-Catholic.

The 3rd Phase (1985-89)

- In 1984 contacts were resumed.
- In the first two phases the main concern was mutual recognition. The third addressed the biblical concept of *koinonia* (fellowship): Communion of Saints; the Spirit and the NT Vision of Koinonia; Koinonia, Church & Sacraments; Koinonia & Baptism.
- The results emphasised growing convergences but also substantial differences.

The 4th Phase (1990-97)

- The main topic was evangelism, including its relationship with social justice, the burning issue (for Rome) of proselytism (on the agenda since 1972) and the possibility of future witness together.
- The Final Document, *Evangelisation, Proselytism and Common Witness*, formulated proposals **always with a view to overcoming proselytism and bearing common witness**. It also stressed that evangelism must take the ecumenical aspect into account. If missionaries do not recognise others as Christians, their outreach is proselytism. It was necessary to distinguish between Christian communities (including Pentecostals) with which ecumenical relations could be established and sects, cults and others.

The 5th Phase (1998-2003)

- Topics covered included: How to become a Christian; Conversion & Salvation; Faith & Salvation; Baptism in the Spirit and Salvation; Christian Experience within a Community & Discipleship.
- Both Scripture and the Fathers/Tradition were taken into account.

Conclusion

Alongside points of convergence, the Dialogue pinpointed strong conflicts and very serious problems. Nonetheless, the Dialogue helped further the overall Vatican strategy of breaking down barriers to the attainment of the Holy Grail: full visible union with the mother.

In the meantime, many other signs of progress towards this goal were to be seen in other areas in the North American pentecostal/charismatic scene.

The Role of Vinson Synan in the coming together of Catholics & Pentecostals/Charismatics

Synan, who held several high offices in the Pentecostal Holiness Church between 1973 and 1985, has been a key Pentecostal ecumenical figure. He accepts the Catholic renewal as genuinely Pentecostal. In one book he said: "There is only one outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter days, although the streams flow through channels known as 'classical Pentecostalism,' Protestant 'neo-Pentecostalism,' and the 'Catholic charismatic renewal.'

- In 1972, he was invited by Kilian McDonnell to speak at the 3rd annual Catholic Charismatic Conference at Notre Dame, becoming a frequent speaker at Catholic Charismatic events.
- In the early 1970s, he was invited to participate in the Vatican-Pentecostal Dialogue.
- In 1985, Synan founded and chaired the N American Renewal Service Committee to formulate a unified vision of evangelism. The Steering Committee comprised Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Wesleyan, Mennonite, Lutheran and Episcopalian charismatics along with mainline denominational pentecostals and evangelicals. The aim was to encourage a united global evangelistic drive in the power of the Spirit by 2000. But what kind of evangelism?
- Under its wing (also chaired by Synan) was The N American Congress on the Holy Spirit and Evangelism. Its main aim was to hold N American ecumenical national and regional conferences. Its HQ is ***in the same building as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal magazine, "New Covenant"***. The director for the first two national congresses, New Orleans and Indianapolis, was a prominent Catholic priest. They helped cement the sell out to Rome and ecumenism.
 - The 1986 New Orleans Leaders Conference hosted over 7,500 from the Pentecostal and mainline denominations' renewal movement
 - In the 1987 General Congress, there were 40,000 (51% Catholic). The parade contained dozens of banners venerating Mary, including one proclaiming "To Jesus thru Mary".
 - Further Congresses were held in Indianapolis in 1990 (25,000, 40% Catholic); San Antonio 1992 (8000, 10% Catholic); Orlando 1995 and St. Louis 2000.

Other significant Pentecostal/Charismatic figures advocating closer links with Rome

Many other well-known figures were also taking Pentecostals and Charismatics down the perilous road to Rome:

- **Kathryn Kuhlman** merged Catholic ideas and support with her ministry. In October 1972, Pope Paul gave her (dressed in black) a private audience, after which she said, 'When I met Pope Paul there was a oneness.' Her official biographer said ***she did not like to conduct her services without Catholic priests on her platform***, especially if they wore clerical collars or, better yet, cassocks.
- In 1987, at the time of a papal visit to Los Angeles, **Robert Schuller** said to Cardinal Manning, ***"It's time for Protestants to go to the shepherd and say, What do we have to do to come home?"***
- In 1988, **Benny Hinn** spoke on TBN of his audition with John Paul II. He spoke highly of him, describing him as a "prophetic Pope," and "Spirit filled". At his death, Hinn said, ***"Pope John Paul II pointed millions to Jesus Christ"***. His office has a photo of himself with John Paul II.
- As well as praising the Pope, Hinn recognises the Marian shrines of Lourdes and Fatima as legitimate, has taken part in a Catholic mass and has agreed to encourage his crusade attendees not to leave the Catholic church.
- In 1989 Hinn announced that **Marilyn Hickey, James Robison and Paul & Jan Crouch** (TBN founders) had agreed to an audition with the pope. "Something is happening in the Catholic Church today that is really of God," he said.
- In September 1988 **Harold Bredesen**, chairman of Pat Robertson's CBN board, thanked the pope for his audience, saying ***it was time for evangelicals to look again at Catholicism***. In 1989, he instigated a move to grant John Paul II the "Prince of Peace" award.

3. Conclusion

In his 6th vision, William Branham saw the rise *in the United States* of a most beautiful woman. Though beautiful, she was indescribably hard, and cruel, wicked and cunning. She was given full power over the people, dominating the land with her authority.

The vision did not reveal whether this signified the rise of a literal woman or of an organisation Scripturally characterised as a woman. William Branham believed it was *the rise in America of the Roman Catholic Church*.

Whether a literal woman or the Catholic Church, in practice both are currently rising in power and influence in the United States.

This Appendix has focused on the rise in influence and acceptance of the Catholic Church in the United States religious scene, especially from the 1960s on.

The most remarkable aspect of this rise has been among those who were hitherto very wary of Rome, the evangelicals and pentecostals. And the prime reason has been the actions of the very personalities that William Branham foretold: Billy Graham, Oral Roberts and David du Plessis. Graham influenced the evangelicals and Roberts and du Plessis the pentecostals/charismatics.

One of the things that most effectively mellowed past pentecostal wariness of Rome has been the Charismatic Ecumenical Renewal, especially after the dramatic rise of the Catholic charismatic movement in the United States.

The inspiration spirit of Rome was not slow to see the potential of the CER to attain its Holy Grail, full visible union with the "separated brethren". The World Council of Churches, which was open to Rome, had failed to allure the evangelicals and pentecostals into the ecumenical fold. Its influence was primarily felt only among the Orthodox and liberal Protestant denominations. But the CER is at the forefront of the Vatican strategy to bring pentecostals and charismatic Protestants back to Rome.

At the same time as consolidating her control over the Catholic charismatic renewal, Rome sought to use that renewal to progressively take control over major interdenominational CER functions. But this was to be done as unobtrusively as possible so as not to alarm Protestants. The CER plays a central role in the covert Vatican strategy, the ultimate goal of which is to bring Protestants back to Rome.

So, shockingly, those that accept gifts and miracles, the CER and an increasing number of mainline Pentecostals, are actually playing a pivotal role in facilitating the satanic end time purpose of bringing to power the false prophet and the Antichrist, also men of gifts and miracles.

Also, If the cruel woman in the USA that the Lord showed William Branham in 1933 is indeed the Roman Church, could it be that the means of her rise to power will be the CER and, of all people, the Pentecostals?

John L Birkin

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