



"Drowning in the Tiber (Part 4)"
Responding to Francis Beckwith's *Return to Rome:*
Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic
tiber041909(4)
Selected Scriptures



Introduction:

I. Francis Beckwith's Testimony

A. What is a testimony?

B. Paul's testimony as (recorded in Acts 22 and 22; Philippians 3 and 1 Timothy 1)

1. Common Elements:

- There is a confession that I once may have been religious (in Paul's case, highly orthodox as a Jew), yet at the same time I was lost and hellbound
- There is an affirmation that salvation is totally a work of God; He sovereignly opens eyes and hearts to the truth
- There's a "pearl of great price" transaction – remember Jesus' parable in Matthew 13 – the Kingdom of heaven is like a merchant who finds a pearl of great value and sells all that he has to own it
- There's a repudiation of any personal merit or righteousness, and rather a desperate understanding that "My righteousness is totally in Christ"
- There is a confession of Christ's resurrection and His Lordship
- There is an affirmation that this salvation is received solely by faith
- There is confidence in persevering or continuing in the truth of the faith by God's grace

2. These elements are conspicuously absent when you read Beckwith's account of what it meant for him to be an evangelical

- a. Instead one finds 1) Experientialism; 2) Thomism and Free-will theism;
3) Ecumenicism; 4) A muddled understanding of the Gospel

II. Ecumenicism

A. What is "Ecumenicism?" (or "ecumenism")

The word group comes from the Greek noun, οἰκουμένη which has a basic meaning of "the whole or entire world." It's a word of inclusivism.

In modern-day usage, word "ecumenical" became popular following the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Scotland. There, delegates from missionary organizations met to address what they considered *"the scandal of competing Christian denominations."* They resolved to put aside their differences for that of peace and unity.

B. Different (and healthy) levels of ecumenism

C. Can You Have Your Cake and Eat It Too?

1. The "heartwarming" story of Walter Martin and Fr. Mitch Pacwa
2. Beckwith's various forms of Christianity

D. The Culture War Connection

"Much of this book is a celebration of the Christianity that has shaped my life, intellectually and spiritually, *both in its Protestant and Catholic forms.*"

III. Did Vatican II Really Change Anything?

Former Roman Catholic priest, Richard Bennett writes: "The major tactical change that took place in Vatican Council II (1962-65) was to declare officially that Rome was now ready to ecumenize with Hindus, Muslims, and other religions. In particular, Evangelicals, formerly called heretics, were now to be seen as 'separated brethren' and thus to be wooed, 'little by little,' back into the Roman Catholic fold. This was to be done primarily by means of dialogue." [The Ecumenical Apostasy of the Present Day]

"It is my hope that this book may effectively . . . communicate to my fellow Christians, *both Protestant and Catholic*, an understanding of the reasons . . . that culminated in my departure from and eventual return to the Catholic Church." –Francis Beckwith

IV. Is the Roman Catholic Church Really Ecumenical?

A. Let's count the anathemas!

1. Pope Boniface VIII's bull *Unum Sanctum*
2. 16th c. Council of Trent
3. Vatican I and Vatican II
4. The Official Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 5 John Hardon's popular and authoritative Catechism