

FLIRTING WITH MARY

PROTESTANTS WONDER AFTER MARY

For hundreds of years the *Roman Catholic Church* has given honor and adoration to Mary, which the Scriptures do not. During the past sixty years, one of the most important trends in the Catholic Church has been an even greater emphasis being placed upon her sacredness! She is being increasingly referred to as holy, the Mother of God and is dubbed the Co-Redemptrix, thereby making her an object of idolatrous worship (e.g., the Rosary has ten prayers to Mary for each two directed to God).

In 1923, Pope Pius XI sanctioned Pope Benedict XV's (1914-1922) pronouncement that Mary suffered with Christ, and that with Him, she redeemed the human race. And Pope Pius XII officially designated Mary the Queen of Heaven and Queen of the World.

Catholics claim not only that Mary was perfectly sinless from conception, even as Jesus was (doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary," proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1854 – "Let all the children of the Catholic Church ... continue to *venerate*, invoke, and pray to the most blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God, conceived without original sin."), but that the reason she never sinned at any time during her life was because she was *unable* to sin (cf. Lk. 1:46,47; Rom. 3:10,23; 5:12; Heb. 4:15; 1 Jn. 1:8,10). Catholics also believe that Mary was a perpetual virgin (cf. Ps. 69:8; Matt. 1:24,25; 13:54-56; Mk. 6:3; Jn. 7:5), and that she was assumed, body and soul, into heaven shortly after her death (doctrine of the "Assumption of the Virgin Mary," declared by Pope Pius XII in 1950). Finally, she was given the title "Mother of the Church" in 1965. The consequence of all this veneration of Mary, in effect, establishes her authority **above** Christ's! Rome says, "He came to us through Mary and we must go to Him through her." All this is so obviously idolatrous; one wonders why Catholics take offense when their religious affections are called *cultic*.

There are some Roman Catholic observers that continue to [naively] believe that Mary has still not *officially* been proclaimed "Co-Redemptrix with Christ." In fact, the premier issue of the Roman Catholic publication *Catholic Heritage* displayed a front page with the title: "Mary, Mother of the Church." In a Question and Answer column the question is asked, "At the foot of the cross, Mary shared in the mystery of the passion. True or False? Answer: True. Mary united her sorrows to those of her Son. The sorrowful and immaculate heart of Mary bled with her Son for all of mankind. For this reason, *we invoke her under the title of Co-Redemptrix.*"[1]

In 1991 *Time* magazine cover story on Mary reported, "A grass-roots revival of faith in Virgin is taking place worldwide. Millions of worshipers are flocking to her shrines, many of them young people. Even more remarkable are the numbers of claimed sightings of the Virgin."[2]

Many Catholic websites publish positive statements *allegedly* made by Protestant reformers in support of Mary, attempting to lead modern Protestants to accept her as a *blessed* evangelical woman that should no longer be ignored. Indeed, in the past 30 years a growing number of Protestant leaders have been speaking out in favor of personifying Marian qualities as spiritual symbols (Anglicans, Evangelicals, Methodists, Presbyterians and Lutherans). They are flirting with Mary.[3]

The latest Protestant appeal came in December of 2003 in *Christianity Today*:

Vapid Qualifier

"First, we find no biblical warrant for the kind of devotion to Mary that flourishes among many of the Catholic faithful. Mary's perpetual virginity (the belief that she had no children after Jesus and remained a virgin throughout her life), immaculate conception (that she was born without the stain of original sin), and bodily assumption (that she was taken body and soul into heaven after she died without seeing corruption) are extra biblical beliefs that cannot be traced to the earliest historical memory of the church."

Introducing Compromise

"Let me suggest five ways for us to think biblically about the mother of Jesus – the Blessed Evangelical Mary.

"Spotless Bride *and* Pilgrim Sinner

"Mary stands, along with John the Baptist, at a unique intersection between the old and new covenants. Mary's role points backward. In the gospels, she is the culmination of a prophetic lineage of pious mother's – Sarah, Rachel, Hannah (and not forgetting Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth who appear in Matthews genealogy)....

"But Mary's role also points forward. As the Daughter of Zion, Mary also represents the eschatological and redeemed people of God....

"Virgin Mother of a Man

"Especially since the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy of the 1920s, belief in the virgin birth has been a test of evangelical orthodoxy; its denial is still likely to get one fired from most evangelical schools. Despite fervently advocating this doctrine, however, evangelicals may have missed two important aspects of its meaning.

"First, evangelicals have defended the miraculous character of the virgin birth because they see it under girding the deity of Jesus Christ.

"The God-bearer

"Evangelicals can and should join with other Christians in celebrating the virgin Mary as *theotokos*: or as historian Jaroslav Pelikan translated the classic theological word, as the one who gave birth to the one who is God.

"The purpose of the title was not so much to exalt Mary as to assert the unity of divinity and humanity in her son....

"We use God-bearer language to describe the mother of Jesus, not in order to exalt Mary

unduly but to confess Christ completely, to assert that the beloved Son of the Father was "born of a woman" – God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16).

"Handmaiden of Faith

The "Reformers recognize Mary as the one who hears the Word of God and responds in faith, and thus is justified by faith alone. Mary was a disciple of Christ before she was his mother, for had she not believed, she would not have conceived. Mary's faith too is not the achievement of merit, but the gift of divine grace. This means that when we praise and love Mary, it is God whom we praise for his gracious favor to his chosen handmaid.

"Pointers to Jesus

"The New Testament portrays Mary as among the last at the cross, and among the first in the Upper Room. She bridges not only the Old and New Testaments at Jesus' birth, but also the close of his earthly ministry and the birth of the church. It is significant that in Eastern iconography, Mary is never depicted alone, but always with Christ, the apostles, and the saints.

"At the foot of the cross, Mary represents the church as a faithful remnant. Already before the Reformation, Mary was seen as the archetype of the remnant church: her faithfulness alone kept the church intact during Christ's suffering on the cross.

"When all of the disciples (including Peter!) had fled in fear, Mary remained true to Christ and his word. Her fidelity unto the cross showed that the true faith could be preserved in one sole individual, and thus Mary became the mother of the (true remnant) church. This is why the Reformers honored Mary."^[4]

Flirting with Mary. Teaching falsehood. Did you notice the progressive compromise of thought? At the end she is an icon–idol. Where is she declared as the Biblical Mother of the remnant church? The woman clothed with the sun in Revelation 12:1 crying in childbirth soon to deliver the Messiah Child has become a misinterpreted icon justifying the reverence and honor to the earthly mother of Jesus. That smacks at the growing trend among Protestants viewing prophecy through literalistic eyes. This fatally detracts from the typological redemptive theme, the covenant completion message that under girds *all* of prophecy. Mary does not represent the church as the faithful remnant! That is a false statement. The remnant keep the commandments of God and are the embodiment of the Testimony of Jesus (Revelation 12:17).

***Christianity Today* concluded:**

"This is the Mary Protestants can and should embrace. We do not think of the mother of God, an object of devotion by herself, in isolation from her son. We need not go through Mary in order to get to Jesus, but we can join with Mary in pointing others to him [a deceptive statement supporting her intermediary role]. This, more than anything else, will honor her as she honored him. [Why do we need to honor her?]"^[5] This Protestant magazine is flirting with the Catholic Mary.

Incrementalism, compromise edging ever closer to claiming supernatural powers in Mary is this Protestant trend. The most sinister "mystery" of all is the growing number of apparitions of Mary – a nice Catholic word for a *séance of the dead* Mary talking with people.

Recently, "Mary" appeared as the "Mother of the Eucharist" and stated that she will close history by bringing forth another birth of "Christ."^[5]

That would be one of the most deceptive events in Christian history for the dispensationalist. Paul warned: "And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (II Corinthians 11:14). This will occur prophetically. Satan is the Abaddon or Apollyon of the fifth Trumpet (Revelation 9:11) and the "eighth" of the beast leaders of Revelation 17:11 . Those who expect to see Christ set up an earthly kingdom will be disappointed, just as the misguided ancient Jews were. Through Marian apparitions, the world is being prepared for Satan's last attempt to woo the earth as he comes trying to represent Christ Himself.

Protestants are flirting with Mary. Soon Mary will ensnare their souls for eternity.

Franklin S. Fowler Jr., M.D.
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References:

[1] www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Cults/Catholicism/mary.htm

[2] *Time*, December 1991.

[3] mariology.com/section/modern.htm

[4] <http://christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/012/a.34.html>

[5] users.stargate.net/~ejt/ages12.htm