

POPES WHO DISPROVED PAPAL INFALLIBILITY

The Roman Catholic Church claims that Jesus Christ who was the only person ever to have been God in human flesh made the apostle Peter the head of the Church and the first pope and infallible. The popes are the successors of Peter endowed with the same powers. However history speaks of popes who used their infallibility and still erred. Papal infallibility - only made a dogma for Catholics in 1870 - is refuted by history.

POPE LIBERIUS DISPROVES PAPAL INFALLIBILITY

Protestants hold that some popes proclaimed doctrines that were contrary to the Catholic faith which disproves papal infallibility and the infallibility of ecumenical councils like Vatican 1 which declared the pope infallible. They cite the case of Pope Liberius who allegedly subscribed to the heresy that Jesus was not God, Arianism, by signing and approving of an Arian Creed.

The Catholics say the fact is that Liberius signed a document containing a statement about Jesus in creed form that could have been interpreted in an Arian sense or in accordance with Catholic doctrine. Plus, they say that he was in exile so he could have been forced. Catholics stress that no pope can give an infallible teaching except in freedom – this is a bizarre teaching for if God protects his Church from error he will give it the heroic virtues to help it stand by the truth no matter what like he does for so many saints. For God not to do this means God can let Hell win over his Church. Even if the error is soon corrected it still happened and led people astray. When the pope is forced he does not intend the Church to accept his doctrine. It can't always be clear if the pope is forced.

Ronald Knox in Difficulties page 126 states that Liberius was forced to teach heresy and that he withdrew the heresy when he was free to. This is a lie for Liberius did not claim that he approved heresy under force and there is no evidence that he apologised for doing this.

Today there are rumours that cruel cardinals and the Roman Curia used to force Pope John Paul II to do things against his will and he didn't have the manpower or the health to stand up to them. How do you know then that any pope made a new dogma in freedom? How can you prove that Pius IX was not blackmailed to make the Immaculate Conception doctrine? I repeat: it is strange that Catholics hold that the pope cannot teach false doctrine using his infallibility for the gates of Hell cannot prevail over the Church like Christ promised and then they say that Liberius was forced to make a false infallible statement. The gates prevailed with Liberius. Even if the damage was corrected it still happened and the gates prevailed a little while.

There was a conflict between Liberius' contemporaries as to whether or not he did sign the Arian statement to get his freedom (page 193, Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine, Question 403, Radio Replies 3). He did not sign the document that clearly denied the divinity of Jesus but he did sign the one that could be interpreted in a Catholic or an Arian way and allegedly put a note to make that clear onto it (page 123, Reasons for Hope). He certainly believed the equivocal statement was heresy for he refused to sign it for two years (page 193, Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine). So when he signed it his intention was to promote heresy.

He knew the note would be thrown away so it was a waste of time to write it. It seems that this story of the note was invented because he had a red face. If there had been a note it would have been destroyed and its existence would never have been known and the pope certainly didn't speak about the note. There is no evidence for the existence of the note for even many Catholic books do not speak of it (page 167, Church and Infallibility). He knew the document was ambiguous but still pro-Arian and intended to be and he signed it. He knew he could not sign the equivocal statement for it was destined to be taken as an Arian statement by the Arians. You don't sign a contract and put a note on it to clarify it or to limit its scope. That is invalid. Note or not the pope signed heresy into Church dogma.

The records give no evidence that Liberius was tortured to make the statement. Pope Fiction page 142-143 confesses that there is evidence that Liberius was released for signing and evidence that he was released just because it was seen that trying to force him was a waste of time. He had been exiled for two years over his belief in the divinity of Jesus which would have toughened him up. Liberius would have said if he had been compelled but he never did. When speculation has to be employed to defend papal infallibility the doctrine is on shaky ground. If he was really forced then why wasn't he forced to sign the clearly Arian formula?

Both St Sulpicius and Pope Athanasius 1 denied that Liberius gave in and signed. But the fact is there was a creed with the

pope's signature on it and if anybody was going to forge why didn't they put his name on the heretical creed rather than on the ambiguous one?

He probably did sign the statement for he never denied signing it though he got much criticism for signing it. Some of the Catholics would have lied and said he didn't anyway, for the sake of the doctrine of Jesus' divinity. And these days most Catholics say we do not know what he signed or if he signed anything.

The statement was intended for the whole Church which was nearly wholly Arian at the time. If the Arians knew of papal infallibility or believed that the pope was the rock of the Church of the true faith and it was built on him then they had to get him to freely sign it meaning that Arianism was the true Church if the promises of Christ to keep the Church on earth forever were true. They would have done this even if the pope was only a bishop with great influence. Also, despite what the Church says (Question 403, Radio Replies 3), if Liberius signed the document it was meant to instruct the whole Church which fulfils the criteria for papal infallibility. But he was not infallible so no pope is.

Pope Fiction says the pope most probably didn't sign the statement for the emperor would have boasted about it and he didn't. But what would he have to boast about if he forced him to sign it or if the statement was ambiguous and could be accepted by an Arian or a Catholic? Liberius knew that his signing the statement would mean supporting the Arian cause for he wouldn't have been asked to sign it otherwise. There can be no doubt that Liberius was teaching Arianism by signing it for it is not the ambiguous wording of the statement that counts but its interpretation. Another reason why the emperor might not have boasted was because Liberius was just a top bishop of the Church and was not considered to be the infallible rock the Church was built on. There is no reason to believe that there was a modern kind of pope in those days.

We know from Liberius' own letters which are preserved by St Hilary of Potiers that he admitted he was a heretic (page XV, Roman Catholic Claims). It is also known that Liberius opposed St Athanasius for upholding the Nicene Creed though it was heresy for him to oppose him (page 127, A Handbook on the Papacy). The Roman Church responds by dismissing the letters as fakes but even many of its own scholars admit their authenticity (ibid, page 127). Rome must think that people had nothing better to do than fake letters to refute papal infallibility before it became an issue in the nineteenth century! St Athanasius himself recorded the pope's heresy.

POPE VIGILIUS AND OTHER PAPAL HERETICS

Pope Vigilius officially taught and supported heresy against the orthodox doctrine that Jesus is fully God and fully man in one person (page 149, Pope Fiction). He is said to have been a fake pope at that time for he deposed a pope and took his place (page 124, Reasons for Hope). The real pope excommunicated Vigilius. We read in Reasons for Hope page 124 that this pope, Silverus, was the only member of the Catholic Church for all the rest had apostatised to Vigilius! Jesus founded an astounding religion if it gets into messes like this! Later, Vigilius was validly elected pope two years following the appalling death of Silverus who was later proclaimed a saint. The election was bizarre. Reasons for Hope says that the electors couldn't choose another pope because he would go the same way as Silverus so they were forced to elect Vigilius (page 125). What is obvious from this is that they held the election not out of a desire to pick a successor for Silverus but to get rid of the appalling Vigilius but they found it wasn't possible because of political blackmail so they were forced to elect Vigilius. Another thing that is obvious is that the election contradicts the Catholic doctrine that if force happens the election is invalid but still they consider Vigilius a true pope probably because the Church accepted him at the time.

The Catholic reasoning is that when Vigilius sealed the heresy with his approval he was a false pope because no power on earth can depose a true pope so Silverus was the true pope. This would mean that Vigilius teaching such heresy officially and approving of it for the whole Church would not affect papal infallibility. Silverus had no supporters at all when he was deposed (page 124, Reasons for Hope). Silverus was kidnapped and taken away on a ship when Vigilius deposed him and never seen again. But how could you believe in papal infallibility when a man considered by the entire Church to be a real pope leads the Church astray? Isn't that the gates of hell winning over the Church despite the Catholic interpretation of Jesus' words to Peter that you are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it? If the gates can do that then why be confident that the pope cannot lead the Church into false doctrine?

A Catholic would think Silverus resigned when the whole Church left him. Would the Holy Spirit let people leave a true pope? The pope is a mark that shows where the true Catholic Church is to be found. Catholics say today that the idea of the visibility of the Church is so important that even if a papal election was fiddled and invalid the acceptance by the Church of the man presented as the true pope would validate him as the real pope. Otherwise you would have the case of the true Church not having the mark of the true Church the pope. We have no evidence that Silverus did or didn't resign. If he had resigned Vigilius didn't need to tell anybody for he had all the support he wanted. That Silverus didn't resign rather than be forced out of the papacy in such an undignified way is just something the Church assumes because if he did resign then Vigilius was never an antipope and the Church doesn't want to admit that. As for deposing, the Church at the time accepted it as valid when the pope was thought to depose himself if he fell into heresy. That is obvious from the eager acceptance Vigilius got from the whole Church. Strictly speaking Vigilius could never say he deposed the pope but that the pope

deposed himself by heresy. He had to say something to justify getting rid of Silverus and taking his place as pope the next day. Vigilius was probably a real pope from the start.

It is argued that Vigilius knew too little about theology to manage to make an infallible dogma out of his heresy. So, if he tried to be infallible he was not. But this is just pure Catholic craftiness for he did not need to be an expert in theology to be able to back up the heresy. All he needed to know was that Jesus was fully God and was also fully man which is a mystery so there is nothing to be learned about it anyway. Also the Church has no rules or guidelines about how much research a pope needs to do or how much information he needs to be able to exercise infallibility.

Vigilius issued a Constitutum which was addressed to the whole Church and to all the bishops that if anybody contradicted the Three Chapters they were refuted by the authority of the apostolic see which was given by the grace of God (page 187, A Handbook on the Papacy). The Three Chapters taught heresy. This statement was addressed to the whole Church and it says that its being made is sufficient refutation of attacks on the Three Chapters because it is made with full authority given from God. If that is not an infallible statement then what is it? It is certain that when he condemned as true pope, in a decree called the Judicatum, the orthodoxy of the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon that he intended to use his full authority which would include infallibility if he had it (page 56, Reason and Belief). He also defied the Council of Constantinople which took place later. If you use the popes alleged lack of research or bad reasoning as an excuse for rejecting doctrines he proclaims infallible then what good is infallibility?

And how could a person who had separated himself from the Church by heresy and by harming a pope and becoming an antipope that led the whole Church into schism against the true pope become a true pope later? This question doesn't seem to perturb Catholics who believe that Vigilius was guilty of these sins. It was believed up until the time of Pius XII that a heretic couldn't become pope except in outward appearances. That was the law until the pope changed it.

Vigilius when he was considered a valid pope after the death of Silverus kept changing his mind about the heretics he condemned. He flipped flopped with official condemnations. The Church assumes without documentation from anyone involved at first hand or anybody that he was pressured into harming Church teaching this way (Pope Fiction page 150). If he was really infallible the Lord God would make sure this could be clarified and not only clarified but proven but when it wasn't we can be sure that Vigilius could have misled the Church with his condemnations. It's evidence not guesses we need.

Pope Zozimus (417-418) approved of Pelagius a heretical teacher until Augustine put him right. Then he condemned the heretic. The Church explains, "Zozimus was only sanctioning the orthodox parts of the heretic's doctrine and was ignorant of the unorthodoxy. Zozimus never opposed Roman dogma intentionally. The doctrine of infallibility says the pope can err like that." But he must have known something. He had to have known that Pelagius was a controversial figure. And to say that when a pope approves of heresy that it is only the orthodox parts of the heresy that he approves of makes the idea of papal infallibility unfalsifiable and ultimately unconvincing.

Pope Paul V and Urban VIII condemned the teaching of Galileo that the sun does not move and the earth revolves around it. They thought it was contradictory to the Bible so the Catholic Church brushes that blunder off and says that the Church is not infallible in matters of science and never thought it was. The doctrine of the virgin birth and the six days of creation is scientific material but also doctrinal. Don't say then that the attack on Galileo's statements was simply scientific. The popes condemned through the Holy Office and the Index. The Church says an infallible statement is made directly to the Church unlike these popes. But surely if the pope was dying and wished to make an infallible statement it would be valid though relayed through the authorities under him? It is certain the popes wanted the whole Church to hear and heed their decree of condemnation.

You must read chapter 12 of Vicars of Christ. There you can find a quote from Adrian VI in 1523 who declared that many popes were heretics. He named John XXII as one. John XXII implicitly denied that the saints could intercede for the living when he denied that anybody goes to Hell or Heaven until the final judgement.

Pope Leo X who died in 1521 stated that all papal bulls were infallible (page 271, Handbook to the Controversy with Rome, Vol 1). He obviously intended this to be an infallible statement for the whole Church for that is what you mean when you call something infallible. Even the most rigid Roman Catholic would say Leo was wrong so why is he not listed as a heretic then?

HONORIUS

Pope Honorius wrote to Sergius with a view to instructing the Church. Sergius like himself was a major influence. But both of them denied Jesus had a human will and a divine will. They said he had only one. This heresy is considered major for understanding Jesus as true God and true man is central to the faith. Excuses are that Honorius was not speaking as teacher of the Church or that he wrote badly but did believe the correct doctrine are just rationalisations. The Church

severely condemned him as a heretic simply because he tried to destroy the entire faith.

Conclusion

The errors and heresies of the popes prove that the popes did attempt to lead the Church astray while claiming to be infallible and that therefore papal infallibility is just another Roman Catholic lie.

- A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, Thomas Bokenkotter, Image Books, New York, 1979
A HANDBOOK ON THE PAPACY, William Shaw Kerr, Marshall Morgan & Scott, London, 1962
A WOMAN RIDES THE BEAST, Dave Hunt Harvest House Eugene Oregon 1994
ALL ONE BODY – WHY DON'T WE AGREE? Erwin W Lutzer, Tyndale, Illinois, 1989
ANTICHRIST IS HE HERE OR IS HE TO COME? Protestant Truth Society, London
APOLOGIA PRO VITA SUA, John Henry Newman (Cardinal), Everyman's Library, London/New York, 1955
BELIEVING IN GOD, PJ McGrath, Millington Books in Association with Wolfhound, Dublin, 1995
BURNING TRUTHS, Basil Morahan, Western People Printing, Ballina, 1993
CATHOLICISM AND CHRISTIANITY, Cecil John Cadoux, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1928
CATHOLICISM AND FUNDAMENTALISM, Karl Keating, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1988
CHRISTIAN ORDER Number 12 Vol 35 Fr Paul Crane 53 Penderley Road, Catford, London, SE6 2LH
DAWN OR TWILIGHT? HM Carson, IVP, Leicester, 1976
DIFFICULTIES, Mgr Ronald Knox and Sir Arnold Lunn, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1958
ENCOUNTERS OF THE FOURTH KIND, Dr RJ Hymers, Bible Voice, Inc, Van Nuys, CA, 1976
FROM ROME TO CHRIST, J Ward, Irish Church Missions, Dublin
FUTURIST OR HISTORICIST? Basil C Mowll, Protestant Truth Society, London
HANDBOOK TO THE CONTROVERSY WITH ROME, Karl Von Hase, Vols 1 and 2, The Religious Tract Society, London, 1906
HANS KUNG HIS WORK AND HIS WAY, Hermann Haring and Karl-Josef Kuschel, Fount-Collins, London, 1979
HITLER'S POPE, THE SECRET HISTORY OF PIUS XII, John Cornwell, Viking, London, LONDON 1999
HOW SURE ARE THE FOUNDATIONS? Colin Badger, Wayside Press, Canada
INFALLIBILITY IN THE CHURCH, Patrick Crowley, CTS, London, 1982
INFALLIBLE? Hans Kung, Collins, London, 1980
IS THE PAPACY PREDICTED BY ST PAUL? Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, The Harrison Trust, Kent, 1985
LECTURES AND REPLIES, Thomas Carr, Archbishop of Melbourne, Melbourne, 1907
NO LIONS IN THE HIERARCHY, Fr Joseph Dunn, Columba Press, Dublin, 1994
PAPAL SIN, STRUCTURES OF DECEIT, Garry Wills, Darton Longman and Todd, London, 2000
PETER AND THE OTHERS, Rev FH Kinch MA, Nelson & Knox Ltd, Townhall Street, Belfast
POPE FICTION, Patrick Madrid, Basilica Press, San Diego California 1999
PUTTING AWAY CHILDISH THINGS, Uta Ranke-Heinemann, HarperCollins, San Francisco, 1994
REASON AND BELIEF, Brand Blanshard, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1974
REASONS FOR HOPE, Editor Jeffrey A Mirus, Christendom College Press, Virginia, 1982
ROMAN CATHOLIC CLAIMS, Charles Gore MA, Longmans, London, 1894
ROMAN CATHOLIC OBJECTIONS ANSWERED, Rev H O Lindsay, John T Drought Ltd, Dublin
ROMAN CATHOLICISM, Lorraine Boettner, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Phillipsburg, NJ, 1962
SECRETS OF ROMANISM, Joseph Zacchello, Loizeaux Brothers, New Jersey, 1984
ST PETER AND ROME, J B S, Irish Church Missions, Dublin
THE CHURCH AND INFALLIBILITY, B C Butler, The Catholic Book Club, London, undated
THE CHURCH IN THE CHRISTIAN ROMAN EMPIRE, Studies in Comparative Religion, Rev Phillip Hughes, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1964
THE EARLY CHURCH, Henry Chadwick, Pelican, Middlesex, 1987
THE LATE GREAT PLANET EARTH, Hal Lindsay, Lakeland, London, 1974
THE PAPACY IN PROPHECY! Christadelphian Press, West Beach S A, 1986
THE PAPACY ITS HISTORY AND DOGMAS, Leopold D E Smith, Protestant Truth Society, London
THE PETRINE CLAIMS OF ROME, Canon JE Oulton DD, John T Drought Ltd, Dublin
THE PRIMITIVE FAITH AND ROMAN CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENTS, Rev John A Gregg, BD, APCK, Dublin, 1928
THE SHE-POPE, Peter Stanford, William Hienemann, Random House, London, 1998
THE VATICAN PAPERS, Nino Lo Bello, New English Library, Sevenoaks, Kent, 1982
TRADITIONAL DOCTRINES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH EXAMINED, Rev CCJ Butlin, Protestant Truth Society, London
VICARS OF CHRIST, Peter de Rosa, Corgi, London, 1993
WAS PETER THE FIRST POPE? J Bredin, Evangelical Protestant Society, Belfast
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HEAVEN?, Dave Hunt, Harvest House, Eugene, Oregon, 1988

NOTE: RECOMMENDED BOOK, ROME HAS SPOKEN