



"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone  
who asks you for a reason for your hope"  
1 Peter 3:15

# The Anti-Catholic Bible – Part I

# The Anti-Catholic Bible

**Loraine Boettner** was a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – and an anti-Catholic of the highest order. In 1962, he wrote a book called “**Roman Catholicism**”, which quickly became **THE** authoritative source for Protestant clergy regarding all things Catholic. The problem is that MOST of it is simply false.

The following list of “Catholic Inventions” is taken right out of Boettner’s deeply flawed and defamatory book. He plays fast and loose with the facts and dates in his vilifying diatribe against the Church.

It’s disturbing that in this day of so much available information, many non-Catholic groups *still* use this bogus list to find fault with the Catholic Church – never investigating the fact that most of its claims are patently false, petty and embarrassingly ignorant. This list or variations of it can be found on many anti-Catholic websites and literature.

# The Anti-Catholic Bible (*cont'd*)

Boettner wanted to cast a negative light on the disciplines introduced by the Catholic Church and doctrines declared. He wanted to show that they were nothing more than man-made "*inventions*" because they were not explicitly taught in the Bible. As you will see, he was dead wrong. The doctrinal and dogmatic decrees made by the Church are Scripturally-based while other matters of discipline were declared to accommodate the needs of the growing worldwide Church.

Aside from Boettner's attacks being false, it is interesting to note that Protestants have also added some of their **own** traditions such as altar calls, individual interpretation of Scripture, the withholding of baptism from infants and Sola Scriptura that have no basis in Scripture.

### 1. Prayers for the dead - 300 A.D.

This is a practice that can be seen as far back in Jewish history as **2 Macc. 12:42-46**. The practice of praying for the dead is still done by Orthodox Jews to this day. The New Testament also refers to a prayer for the dead by St. Paul in **2 Timothy 1:16-18**.

On the Epitaph of **Abercius**, the Bishop of Hierapolis, he asks all who may read his grave marker to pray for him. This was written in 180 AD.

### 2. Making the sign of the cross - 300 A.D.

Where Boettner got this phony date, we may never know, but it is *completely* untrue.

**Tertullian** writes about making the sign of the cross circa, **195 A.D.**: *“In all the occupations of our daily lives, we furrow our foreheads with the Sign of the cross”*. This was already a long-established custom when this was written.

### 3. Wax candles - 320 A.D.

Maybe the Church was unaware they were supposed to worship in dark. Is Boettner serious? Is this really an issue? Light represents joy, goodness and purity, whereas darkness represents sadness, desolation, despair, ignorance and evil. The record of the execution of **Cyprian of Carthage** in the year 258 mentions the use of *candles* at his funeral.

God created light: "Then God said 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw how good the light was" (**Gen. 1:3-4**). God appears before Moses in the burning bush (**Ex. 3:2**). God "dwells in unapproachable light" (**1 Tim. 6:16**). God "... is light and in him there is no darkness" (**1 John 1:5**). We see that a constant light is kept burning in God's presence before the Holy of Holies (**Lev. 24:2-4**).

As for the use of candles – there were no electric lights used in churches until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The candle itself is symbolic of Jesus: His flesh – his humanity is symbolized in the pale wax. In the center of the candle, the wick which gives us the light represents his soul. It gives us light until it burns down and is fully consumed, sacrificing itself - representative of the sacrifice Christ himself offered for us. Beeswax, is the purest and the sweetest and is appropriate for representing the sacred humanity of Christ.

#### **4. Veneration of angels and dead saints, and use of images – 375**

That's strange – where did he get this date? We have writings from the Fathers citing an already established practice of venerating saints and angels and speak of their intercession from about 150 years *prior* to Boettner's random date of **375**.

From the earliest of times, we see the Church recognizing those who have gone before us as prayerful intercessors. The term, “**dead saints**”, is particularly offensive to the Catholic because the Church teaches, as do the Scriptures themselves, that those in heaven are more alive than we are. Although they have left this world, they have been made perfect in the Lord, as nothing unclean can enter heaven **Rev. 21:27**.

**Hebrews 12:1** tells us that we are surrounded by them and that they are “**so great a cloud of witnesses**”. As for the “use of images” being somehow wrong - this charge is an amazingly ignorant one. Images have been used for various reasons throughout history such as teaching about Biblical events and to remind people of God and those whom he chose to do his will. Anti-Catholics *choose* to forget that in centuries past most of the population was illiterate and learned of these things from images, statues and stories.

God commanded Moses to create and make use of the image of a bronze serpent to cure those who were dying from snake bites (**Numbers 21:7-9**). He also commanded Moses to place 2 golden cherubim atop the Ark (**Ex. 25:18-20**). Images are **not** necessarily idols.

## 5. The Mass, as a daily celebration – 394

This is complete hogwash.

If some communities *weren't* celebrating daily mass in the early years of the Church, it was because of persecutions and the masses having to be celebrated in secret. A rudimentary knowledge of history would shed light on that. It's easy for people of today to cast aspersions on the Early Church as if they had all of the freedoms that we enjoy, especially the United States. When the Roman Emperor Constantine finally decriminalized Christianity, they were free to practice their faith and celebrate mass as they wished.

As for daily celebration of mass being a later Catholic “invention”, one need only to appeal to Scripture to find the truth. **Acts 2:46-47** explicitly tells us:

***Every day** they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people.*

These passages suggest a **daily** Liturgy of the Word in the in the temple area which was followed by a Liturgy of the Eucharist in their homes.

## **6. Beginning of the exaltation of Mary, the term “Mother of God” first applied to her by the Council of Ephesus – 431**

Gosh – and we thought the *Bible* gave us the first exaltations of Mary (**Luke 1:28-29, 42, 45, 48**).

Later, the term, Theotokos (God-Bearer), which was applied to Mary at the 1st Council of Ephesus in 431, was used to describe the nature of Jesus in response to the ***Nestorian Heresy***, which held that Jesus was not divine. The Early Church always considered Mary to be the Mother of God from the earliest of times.

We see this in the writings of Early Fathers such as **Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Gregory the Wonderworker, Peter of Alexandria, Methodius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ephraim, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Ambrose of Milan, Gregory of Nazianz and Jerome.**

## **7. Priests began to dress differently from laymen – 500**

Maybe it’s because people wanted to be able to tell them apart from the congregation. And this is important *because . . .?*

This is really a non-issue because the very same can be said of the many Protestant denominations whose ministers wear robes, collars or other vestments for their services. This is nothing more than petty anti-Catholicism in its purest form. Priestly vestments symbolize different seasons of the liturgical year.

## 8. Extreme Unction – 526

Are we supposed to disregard the sick and dying? More silliness from those whose sole purpose, it seems, is to defame the Catholic Church.

What Boettner *doesn't* mention is that the Church practice of Extreme Unction (Anointing of the Sick) is derived straight from the Bible itself. It didn't begin in **526**, as he would have you believe:

“Is one of you sick? Let him send for the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Lord's name. Prayer offered in faith will restore the sick man, and the Lord will give him relief; if he is guilty of sins, they will be pardoned” (**James 5:14-15**). **Mark 6:13** tells us that the apostles, having been sent out by Jesus, drove out demons and cured the sick by *anointing* them.

Incidentally, this is a practice that is being resurrected by many Evangelical sects today. Strange how this Catholic “invention” is one that is now being practiced by the very groups that chastised the Church for using it in the first place . . .

## **9. The doctrine of Purgatory, established by Gregory I – 593**

As you will see in many other issues brought up by Boettner, a declaration or decree of a Catholic belief does NOT mean that it was “*invented*” at that particular time. The belief in Purgatory has been believed and written about since the dawn of the Church. One need only open up the Bible and read the following Scripture verses that support the idea of final purification before entry into heaven to see where the Early Church got their ideas: **Matt. 5:25-26, Matt. 12:32, Matt. 18:32-35, Luke 12:58-59, 1 Cor. 3:12-15.**

Along with the Scriptures, Early Church writings from such giants of the early Christianity faith like: **Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan and Augustine** support the Catholic position that this was *always* a belief of the Church.

## **10. Latin Language, used in prayer and worship, imposed by Gregory I - 600**

Maybe Chinese didn't seem like the appropriate choice at the time. Why is this an issue? No matter which language the Church may have chosen as its official language, Boettner would have had a problem with it. This is yet another of the many non-issues you will read on his list.

Latin **was** used in prayer and worship in the year 600. As Christianity spread further West, Latin was the lingua franca and it made sense to adopt it as the official language of the Church. There is nothing sinister about the Church's use of Latin as it was the vernacular of the time. Latin is still the Church's official language – and it is no more mysterious or sinister today than it was in the Early Church.

To imply otherwise is to display an abject ignorance of history.

### **11. Prayers directed to Mary, dead saints and angels, about – 600**

Dead? Since when does “**eternal life**” equate to “**dead**”?

Here we go again with the term, “dead saints”. Does Boettner really think that those in heaven are dead? This is a stretch – even for the most virulent anti-Catholic. The writings of the Early Church are replete with examples of the Church Fathers praying to – and recommending intercessory prayer to the Christians who died before them and petitioning their help – just as we are to pray for and ask for prayer from members of the Body of Christ here on earth. The word, “**pray**” simply means “*to implore*” or “*to make a request.*”

Those who would exclude these brothers and sisters are literally rejecting the Body of Christ. The Early Church **truly** understood that those who have gone before us are no less members of that Body than those of us on earth.

Some examples of this can be seen in the writings of **Origen Cyprian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Hilary of Poitiers, Ephraem of Syria, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, Augustine and Jerome** – ALL of whom echoed the Scriptures on the matter of praying and interceding for one another (**1 Tim. 2:1-3, 2 Cor. 1:6, Jas. 5:16, 1 Pet. 2:5-9, Rev. 5:8, 8:3-4**).

Isn't it interesting to note that these authors **ALL** lived and wrote centuries before this bogus time frame of **600 A.D.**?

## **12. Title of pope, or universal bishop, given to Boniface III, by emperor Phocas – 607**

First of all, the Bishop of Rome was always considered to be Head of the entire Church, as we find in the writings of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Father, Ignatius, as well as **Hermas, Dionysius, Hegesippus, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian**, and others. Secondly, **Tertullian**, writing in the **early 3rd Century** who cited, "***...a pontiff---sovereign, of course---that is, a bishop of bishops.***"

Bishop of Rome, or, "**Pontifex Maximus**", means "**bridge-builder**", a name which was inherited from governmental functionaries of the pagan Romans. This was **long** before **607**.

The list of official title of the Pope are: ***Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the Vatican City State, Servant of the servants of God***

“**Pope**” is not an official title, but a term of endearment.

As for the word, “**Pope**” - it simply means “**Papa**”, or “**Father**”.

- St. Stephen refers to "*our father Abraham*", in **Acts 7:2**.
- In **Romans 9:10**, St. Paul speaks of "*our father Isaac*".
- In **1 Cor. 4:14–15**, he states, "*For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*"

This is a term of affection of a spiritual nature, not a biological recognition or one of worship as anti-Catholics would have people believe.

### **13. Kissing of the Pope’s foot, began with Pope Constantine - 709**

Actually – this practice began ***much*** earlier than the 8<sup>th</sup> century. When Leo IV was elected in 847, it was spoken of as having been a very “ancient practice”. The Emperor Justin paid this respect to Pope John I in 523-26. This is not a requirement by all but an ancient tradition observed in papal enclaves and liturgically in papal masses by Latin and Greek subdeacons.

#### **14. Temporal power of Popes, conferred by Pipin, king of the Franks – 750**

Time for *another* history lesson . . .

In 750, **Pepin the Short** had positioned himself to take charge of the Frankish kingdoms. Since he had been educated by Catholic monks and knew St. Boniface, Pepin asked Pope Zacharias for advice as to whether or not he should take control of the kingdom or not. Pope Zacharias told Pepin that since he held de facto power over the Franks, it was better for all that he take control.

When we study the facts, it becomes clear that Boettner again had his “*facts*” jumbled. Pepin never conferred temporal power on the Pope – it was the **Pope** who confirmed the temporal power of Pepin.

#### **15. Worship of the cross, images, and relics, authorized – 786**

Boy, talk about your anti-Catholic *whoppers!* Catholics do not now, nor have we ever worshipped any object as this would make us guilty of the sin of idolatry. Images and relics are simply reminders of Christ and his devoted followers. We *venerate* them – we do not *worship* them. Veneration simply means to regard something or some one with reverential respect or with admiring deference. A picture of a loved one kept in a wallet is also a *reminder* of that person – but it does not equal worship.

**16. Holy water mixed with a pinch of salt and blessed by a priest – 850**

Would Boettner have preferred a pinch of cayenne pepper instead?

It's interesting to note that the 5<sup>th</sup> Century document, Apostolic Constitutions, credits the use of holy water to **St. Matthew**. Furthermore, two other ancient documents, the Pontifical of **Serapion of Thmuis** and the *Testamentum Domini* give liturgical formula for blessing oil – *as well as water* at Mass.

**17. Worship of St. Joseph – 890**

*St. Joseph?* I thought we worshipped *Mary* . . .

Seriously, though - the Catholic worships God alone and nobody else. Having raised Jesus from a baby, St. Joseph is looked upon as a great example of Christian faith. Whereas, he is venerated, worship of him or ANY person other than God has always been strictly prohibited by the Church.

**18. College of cardinals established – 927**

Perhaps the Church thought college was a logical step after graduating high school?

Seriously, this is yet another non-issue. Boettner's idea that the Church should not grow from an acorn to an oak is reason alone to question his list.

The Church is a living, breathing organism that will grow over time as any healthy body will. It was at the Council of Rome in 499 AD that Pope Symmachus divided the City into various parochial components, with each under the jurisdiction of a priest known as a “cardinale”. A constitution by Pope John VIII published between 873 and 882 specifically mentions these cardinal priests, or *presbyteri cardinales* [34].

A *college* is merely a group of individuals engaged in a common goal or interest. This is yet another example of the petty nature of Boettner’s list.

### **19. Baptism of bells, instituted by Pope John XIII – 965**

Maybe this just sounded like a better idea than “*Baptism of the Kazoos*”. This is nothing more than Boettner’s anti-Catholicism run amok. It was simply referred to as a “*Baptism of Bells*” – it *wasn’t* an actual Christian Baptism. Inanimate objects *cannot* be truly baptized and don’t have a soul.

The ceremony was a blessing by the Bishop of the bells to be plated in the church bell tower. The bells were then given symbolic names – they were not welcomed into the Body of Christ as members.

A blessing of this sort is simply a dedication of an object for a sacred purpose - similar to when a Protestant church is dedicated. Don’t most Protestant churches have names? For centuries, ships have been doused with liquid, blessed and given names yet nobody objects to *this* practice.

## **20. Canonization of dead saints, first by Pope John XV – 995**

Here we go again with the “**dead saints**” slur. This is deceptive claim meant to confuse the reader.

Early Christians honored Christians who had died before them and prayerfully asked them for intercession as early as the end of the first century. This is contrary to the belief of many people that the Church set-up this practice later in its existence. The first saints were those who had given up their lives for their Faith, martyrs.

Whereas, it is true that the Catholic Church began applying a standard of holiness of life to some people who lived exemplary Christian lives and through prayer and investigation have declared that the individual is in heaven, we see that the martyrs were always considered saints from the beginning.

## **21. Fasting on Fridays and during Lent – 998**

Now, this is a stretch – even for Boettner.

As far back as the **1<sup>st</sup> Century**, we read in the **Didache** about fasting on Fridays. As far as fasting during Lent, **Athanasius** writes about it in his ***Festal Letters*** of **331 AD**. In ***The Apostolic Canons***, a document written around 340, we read the admonishment to the clergy and the laity to fast during Lent.

A rudimentary look at history renders Boettner’s date of **998** as nothing but a fairytale.

## 22. The Mass, developed gradually as a sacrifice, attendance made obligatory in the 11th century

***Gradually?*** Well, it did take about 50 years after the death of the Apostle John before we see the first writing that mentions of it, but that's a far cry from the **1079** years that Boettner claims. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century document, the ***The Didache (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles)***, we read that Christians should assemble on the **Lord's Day** for the Eucharist.

It also mentions that they should confess their sins before receiving the Eucharist so that their ***"sacrifice may be a pure one"***. However, this was already an established practice because we see that 1<sup>st</sup> Century Father, **Ignatius of Antioch** also speaks of this sacrifice, as does Irenaeus in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century.

At any rate – they all seem to speak of the Sacrifice of the Mass almost **1000** years before Boettner's fictitious time frame.