

In Defense of Former Jesuit Alberto Rivera

When Chick Publications first published the personal testimony of former Jesuit Alberto Rivera, Rome called upon her ecumenical contacts to go on the attack. Rome's friends attacked the way they always have, by attacking the messenger. Not wanting to publicly discuss the serious charges Alberto lays against his former church, they tried to discredit him personally, hoping people would then not read his message.

The most famous of these personal attacks was an open letter published in Christianity Today, which has been copied and distributed around the world many times since the 1980s. Upon reading this attack, a Christian named James Houston, who had read enough of history to know the truth of Alberto's charges, came forward. Following is the letter he wrote in defense of Alberto Rivera.

Since the Christianity Today letter is still being distributed to attack Alberto's God-given message, even going so far as to deny he was ever a priest, we feel it is appropriate to make Houston's rebuttal available as well. It is vital that Bible-believing Christians understand the true nature of the Roman Catholic Church, so they will understand why they need to reach out in love to Catholics to lead them to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Editor
Christianity Today
465 Gundersen Drive
Carol Stream, Illinois 60187
Dear Sir:

I have read your three page article exposing J.T. Chick's "Alberto" to be a fraud (see Christianity Today, March 13, 1981). I would like to make the following comments on the same hoping that God in His sovereignty would allow this letter to be printed (in full) in a future issue of Christianity Today:

Considering the evidence set forth in your article, though I find many things stated of which Alberto Rivera may or may not be guilty, I can find no evidence in the article that proves him to be a fraud, unless of course, I'm misunderstanding the word: "fraud." You do state what Rome herself has to say about Alberto. Who in a right frame of mind (unless they are totally ignorant of history) would give heed to her words in the light of the following evidence:

Her teaching that "the end justifies the means" allows her the freedom to lie, just as long as it propagates her cause.

H.G. Wells, noted historian, in his book, "Crux Ansata," states:

Page 105 - "Roman Catholicism is a broken and utterly desperate thing, capable only of malignant mischief in our awakening world."

Page 155 - "I think that it stands for everything most hostile to the mental emancipation and stimulation of mankind. It is the completest, most highly organized system of prejudices and antagonisms in existence. Everywhere in the world there are ignorance and prejudice, but the greatest complex of these, with the most extensive prestige and the most intimate entanglement with traditional institutions, is the Roman Catholic Church. It presents many faces towards the world, but everywhere it is systematic in its fight against freedom."

Lord Macaulay, in his "Essays on Ranke's History of the Popes, 1852," page 548, states:

"It is impossible to deny that the polity of the Church of Rome is the very masterpiece of human wisdom....The experience of 1,200 eventful years, the ingenuity and patient care of forty generations of statesmen, have improved that polity to such perfection, that, among the contrivances which have been devised for deceiving and controlling mankind, it occupies the highest place."

Again, Macaulay in his "History of England," (Volume 1, page 47) states:

"the loveliest and most fertile provinces of Europe have under her (Rome's) rule, been sunk in poverty, in political servitude, and in intellectual torpor."

Charles Dickens' "Life," (by Foster, Volume II, page 274) described Popery as:

"the most horrible means of political and social degradation left in the world."

Adam Smith ("Wealth of Nations," Book V, Chapter 1, Part 3, Ant. 3):

"The Church of Rome is the most formidable combination that ever was formed against the authority and security of civil government, as well as against the liberty, reason, and happiness of mankind."

Gladstone ("Speeches of Pope Pius IX," page 173):

"When the Pope speaks of the liberation of the Church, he means merely this, that it is to set its foot on the neck of every other power."

In Dean Stanley's "Life of Dr. Arnold," (Volume II, page 411, London, 1844) we read:

"This is the last night, I trust, in which I shall sleep in the Pope's dominions; for it is impossible not to be sickened with a government such as this, which discharges no one function decently. The ignorance of the people is prodigious (enormous): how can it be otherwise?"

Father Chiniquy in his book, "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome," factuates the Vatican being responsible for the death of that dear man, Abraham Lincoln. He states on Page 512:

"I come fearlessly today before the American people to say and prove that the President, Abraham Lincoln, was assassinated by the priests and Jesuits of Rome."

And if you have read this book, then you have noted that the Vatican also maligned the reputation of Chiniquy for his revealing the evil of Rome. This book was very popular when I first got converted (1957). Today, you probably could not purchase this book in most Christian book stores, due mainly to the influence of the Charismatic Movement, which has been raised up by Satan to lure true Christians into the judgement of idolatrous Rome, though God's Word forbids His people to have fellowship with these wafer-god idolaters (See II Corinthians 6:14-18). It seems rather strange that many Roman Catholics are coming out of Rome, and at the same time, many born-again Christians are going into Rome. You would think that the testimonies of so many former Roman Catholics would be a sufficient warning to these poor deluded souls, but alas, Satan still posing as an angel of light, captivated the hearts and minds of many. Of course, at the root of this apostasy is "sinful pleasure," for the Charismatic Movement allows its followers to do their "own thing," with the word, "repentance," being almost (if not totally) absent from their vocabulary. And though these reprobates have been "bought with a price," they now "deny the Lord that bought them," for they have "chosen the way of Cain." May God use this message to turn some of these souls back into the way before they come to experience just what Paul meant when he said: "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (II Thessalonians 2:12)

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (author of the well-recognized commentary on Romans, published by Zondervan) in his sermon preached in Westminster Chapel on January 29, 1961 and printed in The Westminster Record, May, 1963, states:

"This system (Romanism) is altogether more dangerous than is Communism itself, because this is a counterfeit, this does it in the name of Christ. This is 'the scarlet woman,' this is the most horrible, foul deception of all, because it uses His name."

"Let me warn you very solemnly that if you rejoice in these approaches to Rome you are denying the blood of the martyrs."

"There is no difficulty about this; this is a counterfeit, a sham; this is prostitution of the worst and most diabolical kind. It is indeed a form of the antichrist, and it is to be rejected, it is to be denounced; but above all, it is to be countered."

A. B. Simpson, (founder of the "Christian and Missionary Alliance," with headquarters at Nyack, N.Y.) states very clearly in his book, "The Fourfold Gospel," page 84, the following:

"The predicted 'falling away,' has long ago begun, and the man of sin has set in God's temple already the full time of the prophetic cycle, and the process has begun which is to 'consume and destroy unto the end.' The Papacy has fulfilled almost all the lineaments of its marvelous portrait."

Again, in "The Christian and Missionary Alliance" magazine, editorial page, August 1, 1903, we read:

"The death of the Pope after a protracted illness and a prolonged career of successful administration of the great religious body over which he presided, marked an epoch of great importance. While all bitter controversial spirit may well be hushed in the presence of death,yet we cannot but utter a humble protest against the reckless and indiscriminate way in which many Christians and Christian journals seem to forget notwithstanding the highest personal qualities, that this man was the head and front for the most pernicious and dangerous system of religion on earth today, the very antichrist of prophecy and the unchanged enemy of Christ and His most holy faith."

Certainly there is no mistaking the intent of dear Brother Simpson's words in this editorial for which I give thanks to our dear Lord for recording such a witness for later generations. Hallelujah!

J.C. Ryle, in his book, "Warnings to the Churches," (Published by The Banner of Truth Trust, page 163) states:

"Surely, when the mind of God about idolatry is so plainly revealed to us in His Word, it seems the height of infatuation in any one to join a church so steeped in idolatries as the Church of Rome. To enter into communion with her, when God is saying, 'Come out of her, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues' (Rev. 18:4), to seek her when the Lord is warning us to leave her -- to become her subjects when the Lord's voice is crying, 'Escape for thy life, flee from the wrath to come;' all this is mental blindness."

Again on page 166, we read:

"When Rome has repealed the decrees of Trent, and her additions to the creed, -- when Rome has recanted her false and unscriptural doctrines, -- when Rome has formally renounced image-worship, Mary-worship, and trans-substantiation, -- then, and not till then, it will be time to talk of reunion with her. Till then there is a gulf between us which cannot be honestly bridged. Till then I call on all Churchmen to resist to the death this idea of reunion with Rome. Till then let our watch-words be 'No peace with Rome! No communion with idolaters!' Well says the admirable Bishop Jewell, in his Apology, "We do not decline concord and peace with men; but we will not continue in a state of war with God that we might have peace with men! -- If the Pope does indeed desire we should be reconciled to him, he ought first to reconcile himself to God."

John Wesley in his "Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament," Revelation 13:1, Proposition 5, Page 697:

"The beast is the Romish papacy. This manifestly follows from the third and fourth propositions: the beast has a strict connection with the city of Rome; and the beast is now existing. Therefore, either there is some other power more strictly connected with that city, or the Pope is the beast."

Albert Barnes in his one volume commentary on the New Testament, published by Kregel, also declares without any hesitation, that Rome is Babylon (see Revelation 13 and 17). My copy is on loan at the present time.

Henry H. Halley in the famous "Halley's Bible Handbook," published by Zondervan, contrasts the Roman Papacy with the Beast of Revelation 13 and in Revelation 17, Page 732, he states:

"The horrors of the Inquisition, ordered and maintained by the Popes, over a period of five hundred years, in which unnumbered millions were tortured and burned, constitute the MOST BRUTAL BEASTLY AND DEVILISH PICTURE in all history. It is inconceivable that any Ecclesiastical Organization, in its mania for power, could have distorted and desecrated and corrupted, for its own exaltation, the beautiful and holy religion of Jesus, as the Papacy has done. But Facts are Facts. And, most amazing of all, it seems exactly pre-figured in Revelation. No wonder John's vision made him sick at heart (10:10)."

Matthew Henry, commenting on II Thessalonians 2:4:

"...to whom can this better apply than to the Bishops of Rome...?"

Bishop Ellicott has this to say concerning Revelation 17:

"Is it then, the question must be asked, Papal Rome? The answer is: In so far as Papal Rome has wielded tyrant power, turned persecutor, stood between the spirits of men and Christ, depraved men's consciences, withheld the truth, connived at viciousness, sought aggrandizement, and been a political machine rather than a witness for the righteous King, she has inherited the features of Babylon. The recognition of these features led Dante to apply this very passage in the Apocalypse to Rome under the rule of worldly and tyrant Popes..."

William Smith, in his "Smith's Bible Dictionary," published by Holman, (Four Thousand Questions and Answers), page 405:

"59. What was the fourth beast like? -- It was terrible and strong, and had iron teeth and ten horns.

61. Who is the representative of that fourth or final power now? -- The Pope of Rome. The popish system, as far as it has any remaining power."

These are his comments on Daniel.

Walter Criswell, pastor of the famed First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas commenting on Revelation 17:

"...the worship of mother and child spread throughout the whole world, from Babylon to Assyria, to Phoenicia, to Pergamos, and finally to Rome itself. There the Roman Emperor was elected Pontifex Maximus... and when the Roman Emperor passed away, that title of the rites and mysteries of the cult of mother and child, the Babylon mystery of idolatry, was assumed by the Bishop of Rome."

Dr. H. Ward Beecher, "The Papal Conspiracy Exposed," pages 176-177:

"The system, as a system, is false and pernicious."

Dean Alford, "Letters From Abroad," pages 66-67:

"Rome...is the worst city in the civilized world."

John Albert Bengel, "New Testament Word Studies," Volume II, page 895 (Published by Kregel):

"5. The Beast is the Roman Papacy."

Wycliffe, Luther, Melancthon, Knox, Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, etc., also spoke of the Roman Church being Babylon and the Papacy being the Anti-christ.

When I was first converted about 25 years ago, there was in the front of the King James version of the Bible, the statement that the Pope was the "man of sin." Today, that has been removed. Just another point of the great apostasy that is taking place in regards to the true Church flirting with Rome. We should note how Paul ties in the "falling away" with "that man of sin" in II Thessalonians 2. My personal belief is that the main element of this apostasy is the true Church seeking a common fellowship with this "mother of whores" (Rome) and its "man of sin" (the Pope). As God's Israel of the Old Testament apostasized into Babylon and her idolatry; so it seems that God's spiritual Israel of the New Testament is doing the same thing. But God still has His faithful remnant who still are crying out, "Come out of her, My people." (Revelation 18:4)
And last, but not least, a word from the enemy herself...

The Bull Sanctum, issued by Boniface VIII, 16th November, 1302, (quoted in "The Book of Revelation," by F.W.C. Neser, page 184) reads as follows:

"The Roman Pontiff judges all men, but is judged by no one. We declare, assert, define and pronounce: to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is to every human creature altogether necessary for salvation.

Pope Nicholas said, (quoted in "Antichrist" by Ian Paisley, page 54),

I am all in all and above all, so that God Himself and I, the Vicar of God, have but one consistory, and I am able to do almost all that God can do. What therefore can you make of me but God?

But even with such a great cloud of witnesses, one might be tempted to ask the following question, "Has not Rome changed recently?" To answer this most vital question, I turn once again to the message of D. Martyn Lloyd Jones:

"'Ah but,' you say, 'has not the Roman Catholic Church changed? You are simply looking back, you are speaking as if you lived in the 16th century-- don't you realize you are living in the 20th century?' My answer is quite simple. The proudest boast of the Roman Catholic Church is this, that she never changes, Semper eadem. How can she change? If she changes she will be admitting that she was wrong in the past -- but she was saying then that she was infallible, and that the Pope is the Vicar of Christ and that he cannot make a mistake. If she says that she is capable of change she is denying her central claim! She does not say that she is changing, and she never will. The Church of Rome remains the same. If anything, she is even worse. She has 'added' things to what she taught in the 16th century, such as Papal infallibility, etc. No, there is no change in the Church of Rome. And if there ever is one great world Church it will be because the Church of Rome has absorbed all the rest and swallowed them in their ignorance!"

Looking once again at this most vital question, "Has not the Church of Rome changed?" -- just consider some of the trouble spots in the world today:

Cuba with it's Castro. I wonder if Castro has ever been excommunicated from the Catholic Church?

Poland with its Lech Walesa. Why did Pope Paul II tell Walesa "to remain a member of the Communist system, not to flaunt his rejection of basic Communist principles" according to William F. Buckley, Jr. (N.Y. Daily News, February 3, 1981)?

No one can claim that Buckley is being prejudiced against Rome for he himself is a staunch Roman Catholic. Buckley goes on to say, "One thinks back to 1948, when the Christian Democrats and the Communists were fighting for the soul of Italy. On that occasion Pope Pius the XII issued a write of automatic excommunication from the church of any Catholic who voted for the Communists or who sided with or abetted them in their work. That interdict has never been disavowed. A canonical lawyer given to erstic advocacy could theoretically prove that by giving such advice as the present Pope gave to

Walesa, the Pope excommunicated himself from the Catholic Church. Ridiculous, of course; but only that grand mosaic of paradoxes and accommodations can account for the survival of the church over the centuries."

I would comment on this by saying that Buckley would have been a wee bit truer had he used the word, "hypocrisies," in place of the word, "paradoxes." Nevertheless, Buckley, a staunch Roman Catholic, has unwittingly proven the Pope to be the "hypocrite of the ages." This entire affair seems almost like a replay of the second world war. Rome has proven herself not only to be the "mother of whores," but also the "mother of wars." Avro Manhattan factuates this truth in his book, "Vatican in World Politics." One more statement by Buckley in this same editorial is worthy of mention. He says, "Writing in 1954, Whittaker Chambers predicted that the future of the West's relations with the Soviet Union would best be understood by closely examining the role of Cardinal Wyszyński in Poland."

Ireland, with its I.R.A. which is predominantly Roman Catholic. Jimmy Breslin, (New York Daily News, March 8, 1981) makes some interesting comments on how blood-thirsty Roman Catholics are: "The President and Haig the General somehow might be able to get their small war going in El Salvador, but it won't be a real good one. This is because American Catholics, who used to erupt with joy at the notion of drawing blood, are against it...there just won't be as many people killed as there could be with traditional Catholic participation." No one can accuse Breslin of being prejudiced, for he also is a Roman Catholic.

El Salvador, predominantly Roman Catholic. While President Reagan desires to stop this country from being taken over by the Communists, the main voice speaking out against the U.S. is Roman Catholic. Breslin states, (New York Daily News, March 8, 1981): "American Catholic bishops policy calls for the end of military aid to the El Salvador government. The Rev. Thomas Marti of the Maryknoll wrote: 'It is evident that those of us who are deeply concerned with regard to social justice and human rights in El Salvador, as well as throughout the world, are working in an entirely different framework than President Reagan and his administration.'" In the New York Times, dated February 3, 1981, the U.S. Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (that word, solidarity sounds familiar!) had a one page advertisement entitled, "Let the People of El Salvador Decide," (approximate cost - \$25,000). The majority of the individuals and institutions listed on this committee are Roman Catholic. Some of the more outstanding individuals listed on this committee (though some are not Roman Catholic) are: Andrew Young, former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., of whom New Hampshire Governor Thompson observed that "Young is actually representing the SOCIALIST AND MARXIST NATIONS of the 'third world;'" Kris Kristofferson who pretended to be born again (with the help of Campus Crusade for Christ), but then went back to making obscene movies ("The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea"); Erica Jong, author of immoral books; Jane Fonda, Troublemaker of the Viet Nam conflict; Bella Abzug; Rev. Wm. Sloan Coffin, Senior Minister at N.Y. City's Riverside Church, the peace activist who fractured his wife's skull with a karate chop in 1974 (see N.Y. Post, Sept. 26, 1980). Of course, this advertisement was against the U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

Philippines, which is predominantly Roman Catholic. According to the New York Times, March 20, 1981, page 9, a Jesuit priest attempted to overthrow the present regime of President Marcos. According to Station WINS, in N.Y. City, (April 8, 1981), the election now taking place is running 5 to 1 in favor of President Marcos, so it is for certain that the will of this Jesuit priest was not the will of the people. The question arises, "Whose will was it that Marcos should be overthrown?" There's only one answer. "The Vatican."

One other question that should be on our hearts in discussing this matter is, "Why are most Roman Catholic countries Communistic?" The only answer is that Communism

makes its greatest gains in Roman Catholic countries due to the abounding poverty and ignorance of the people. Note the following statement by John Gunther in his book, "Inside Europe Today," published by Harper and Brothers, page 150:

"The extreme right wing of the Church (of Rome) deplores too active and accent on education, because (a) this may lead to apostasy, and (b) an educated elite, becoming the ruling class, might turn out to be anticlerical and a competitor of the Church."

We should also note the words of H. G. Wells in his book, "Crux Ansata," page 105:

"The Pope is now the head of only about fifty millions of semi-literates scattered about the planet...the Pope sets himself to hold back and frustrate the secular modernization of the world."

Again, H. G. Wells, on page 132:

"Like an octopus it has no creative impulse but only an instinct to survive. In Ireland, Spain, Italy, reactionary France, North and South America, Japan, and wherever it can stretch a tentacle, it seeks allies in every element that is socially base, that will help it to continue its struggle against the awakening liberalism of the 'United Democracies.'"

In light of all this evidence, should we give any logical credence to what Rome has to say about the persons of Jack Chick and Alberto Rivera? God forbid!

Secondly, getting back to Alberto Rivera and your accusation against him and the Chick organization, I do not believe that Jack Chick would jeopardize his well-grounded ministry without some definite leading of the Holy Spirit. Surely a luke-warm Christian would not put himself in such jeopardy. Just a small consideration of what Rome has done to those who exposed her in the past would tell me that Chick has laid his very life on the line. And what of his dear family? Has he not also jeopardized them?

Thirdly, I must consider Alberto himself. Why would he also put himself and his dear family in such jeopardy? Look at the enclosed picture of this dear family. Note the precious smile on Alberto's face. I have never met a child of darkness who had such light upon his countenance. Again, why would he ever enter upon such a venture? What could he possibly gain by such a move? No, logic moves me to conclude that he is being led by the Holy Spirit of our dear Lord. God bless his brave heart!

Fourthly, I must consider Satan's part in all this, in the light of what Jesus says in Matthew 12:25-26, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation...And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" In the light of the much proven fact that Rome has always been a devilish system and the curse of everything it touches, I doubt very seriously that the Devil himself would author a book that at least has started people once again thinking about the great evil of Rome. The Devil may not be wise, but he is shrewd and cunning.

Fifthly, I must also consider the true holy living Christians that I personally know. And though they be few, yet they are in agreement that this is of God.

Sixthly, though Rome has proven herself to be the greatest fraud ever put off on mankind, I do not recall your magazine going to any great length to expose her as such, even though such a move on your part would be a most blessed benefit to all of mankind, especially the body of Christ. Again, I must ask the question, why is your magazine so anxious to expose dear Alberto? A good question, for even if I thought for a moment that his book, "Alberto," was set forth in pretense, could not my heart rejoice (as the Apostle Paul does in Philippians 1:18) that once again this "mother of all spiritual whoredoms" is being brought again to the attention of the true sheep of God? I must say that I am very suspicious of your motive in printing this article. Also, I noted on the second page of your article where Roman Catholic Editor of "Our Sunday Visitor" states: "...The sad thing is that Chick's lies

are hard to refute." It may be that they are "hard to refute" simply because they are true!
Amen!

And last, I must consider the fact that to my remembrance (and I read extensively) I have never read anything against J. T. Chick until he attacked Rome. The Devil's mad and I'm so glad! Hallelujah!

I could go on, but I'm afraid I may have labored you too much already, so I will stop. I do pray that this letter will be received in the spirit in which it is written; and God willing, may the truth set forth in it reach the hearts of many dear souls, lest they end up with the mark of the Beast. May God also encourage your heart to search this matter out diligently, lest you be found to be fighting against the very Spirit of Truth, Himself, even our dear Lord. I do believe if you and I could go to visit with Alberto Rivera, we would walk away fully convinced that he is true. I think you should consider the trip.

Written by one who loves Jesus and hates the devout enemies of Jesus with that perfect hatred that David speaks of in Psalm 139:21-22, I remain,

Someone who is praying for you,

(signed) James M. Houston
Messengers for Eternity
300 Hayes Drive
Saddle Brook, N.J. 07662

P.S. I failed to thank you for the free advertising you have given to Chick's "Alberto." "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (II Corinthians 13:8). Hallelujah!
Martin Luther said: "Cursed be that love and unity for whose sake the Word of God must be put to stake," and I say 10,000 "Amens!" JMH